# MADEMOISELLE
# DE LA FAYETTE.



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# DE LA FAYETTE;

OR, THE

LOUIS XIII.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

MADAME DE GENLIS,

*AUTHOR OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE SWAN, RIVAL MOTHER, SERIES OF NOVELS, &c.*

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*Printed for*

A. K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL-STREET.

1818.

J. Dennett, Printer, Leather-Lane, London.



# MADEMOISELLE DE LA FAYETTE;

OR,

## *THE AGE OF LOUIS XIII.*

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In the review of a brilliant and celebrated age affords a high degree of pleasure, that which went before it cannot be wholly destitute of interest. Sometimes a frightful decline, suddenly producing the most tremendous political convulsions, likewise leads now and then to æras of resplendent glory; at others, several reigns are required to pave the way for one which shall deserve the character of memorable.

It is the high polish of courts, and the love of sovereigns for the arts, that call

forth distinguished talents, and form the public manners. Without even cherishing any desire or hope of rising, an innate instinct invariably impels us to look above our own sphere: thither we are attracted by the light; there we contemplate either delusive meteors that lead us astray, or beneficent luminaries by which we are enlightened.

The national character of the French owes its distinguishing qualities to the chivalry of Francis I.; to the generosity, the valour, and the gaiety of Henry the Great; to the gallantry and dignified pride of Louis XIV. The French character was formed of this happy mixture of heroic virtues and amiable qualities. Something would have been wanting either to these charms or to its greatness, if any one of these monarchs had not existed. Literature and the arts have owed their advancement and their lustre to the protection of those same princes, and to the refined taste which Catherine and Mary de Medicis brought with them

from Italy. Anne of Austria, educated at the court of Spain, communicated to that of France the chivalrous spirit of gallantry which was introduced by the Moors in the south of Europe, and to which the good taste of Louis XIV. in the sequel imparted a higher dignity and elegance.

Anne of Austria and Louis XIII. were both born in the same month of the same year, in 1601;* they were united at the age of fifteen years. The character of the queen seemed to be already formed; she was sprightly, witty, and brilliant. Louis, still a child, and naturally bashful and reserved, felt but too sensibly her superiority over him. It is easy to govern persons of weak, indolent, and austere characters, without gaining their affections; but it is impossible to charm without dazzling them: their admiration is nothing but a kind of astonishment mingled with fear, which, so far from exciting any enthu-

* The queen was five days older than Louis XIII.

siasm in their breasts, fills them only with embarrassment and aversion. The queen might have enslaved Louis, but she had none of the qualities requisite to excite his attachment. Louis admired her beauty, but feared her vivacity: her gaiety, her frankness, her fondness for amusements and festivities, were repugnant to the austerity of his principles; so that from the very commencement of their union, he withdrew himself from her society as much as the rules of decorum would allow.

Mary de Medicis, who then held the reins of government, dreading the influence which a wife so young and beautiful might acquire, neglected no means of strengthening the unfavourable impressions, and confirming the dislike of the king. In this manner were passed the early years of their youth. The queen never complained, neither did she shew the least resentment; but before her favourites she would drop indiscreet pleasantries respecting the conduct and cha-

racter of the king. The reproaches of a forsaken wife, though they may vex, cannot at least wound self-love; but it is impossible to forgive the ridicule of things which ought to excite pity and sorrow, for that must be a mark of contempt and insensibility. Crafty tale-bearers, instigated by the love of mischief, aggravated the aversion of Louis XIII.: it was not in his disposition either studiously to conceal or to give vent to his feelings, and still less to require explanation. He did not lay himself under the restraint of dissembling his resentment, but expressed it by a cold and disdainful silence alone. The queen's pride was hurt by this treatment. Too young to be sensible of her unfortunate and dangerous situation, and cut off from the benefits of salutary advice, she was at no pains to regain the king, and their mutual antipathy became irreconcileable." *

* All these circumstances are historical. See the *Memoirs of Madame de Motteville.*

Louis XIII. had piety and integrity; his morals were irreproachable; he possessed sensibility, a good understanding, a courage worthy of the son of Henry the Great, and even talents for war: he had, however, none of those virtues which ensure domestic felicity; he neglected all his duties as a son, a husband, a brother, a friend, and was neither a great prince nor a good king, because in a sovereign indolence and weakness are the most dangerous of all vices, as strength is the most necessary quality in one who undertakes to carry a very heavy burden. Brought up amidst commotions and factions, Louis knew nothing of royalty but its embarrassments and its shackles: in the supreme authority he beheld nothing but the anxieties of superintendence and the fatigue of commanding. He had received a bad education. Having attained an age when reflection and industry might have repaired its defects, he mistook his ignorance for incapacity. Those who were desirous of governing in his name took

good care to encourage this idea, which moreover furnished an excuse for his indolence; for he would much rather distrust his abilities than endeavour to overcome his aversion to business. The renown of Henry IV., and the tribute of admiration universally paid to his memory, instead of exciting emulation in his son, operated only as a discouragement. The most illustrious models are not always the most useful; they extinguish the ambition to surpass them, which alone is capable of kindling enthusiasm.

There was, however, some difference between Louis XIII. and other slothful sovereigns: that prince did not resign the fortunes of the empire to chance: his understanding and his principles at least enabled him to select a fit substitute to whom to entrust his authority; he did not carelessly relinquish the reins of the state, but committed them with discernment into the ablest hands: he then considered himself as released from all the duties of royalty: he abdicated without

descending from the throne, and by this disgraceful abdication, which proclaimed only an incapacity to reign, without manifesting a dignified contempt of grandeur, he divested himself of all the majesty of supreme rank, and still continued responsible for all calamities. His subjects reproached him for the mischiefs that ensued, and denied him the smallest portion of the glory of his reign. Posterity has confirmed this severe but equitable sentence.

The indolence of Louis needed a prime minister, and his heart sought a friend. Henry IV. found friends who were faithful, and devotedly attached to him; Louis XIII. had only favourites. A still stronger passion which the purity of his soul caused him to take for friendship seemed for some time to engage him. Among the queen's ladies of honour he paid particular attention to Mademoiselle de Hautefort: her discretion and virtue seduced Louis, for such a character in a young and beautiful female was for him

a dangerous snare. Mademoiselle de Hautefort had ambition, a good understanding, and a serious disposition: Louis was pleased with her conversation, and soon felt a certain confidence towards her. To the astonishment of all, he was observed to pay daily visits to the queen, whom he saw but for a moment, and to remain for whole hours in a closet contiguous to the apartment of that princess, where, at stated times, Mademoiselle de Hautefort and some other ladies of honour were in attendance. There Louis, making Mademoiselle de Hautefort seat herself at a window beside him, conversed with her in a low tone, and forgot himself in these interviews, at which the word love was not once pronounced *. The austerity of the king's manners was so well known, that this kind of intimacy did not affect the reputation of Mademoiselle de Hautefort; who indeed, pro-

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* Historical.

bably with a view to prevent all suspicion, never failed to repeat to her mistress whatever was said to her by the king. Her majesty's associates were highly diverted with this new kind of intrigue; and Mademoiselle de Hautefort herself took delight in turning into ridicule the sentiments and conduct of her august lover*: in this she shewed neither prudence nor honesty: she ought either not to have listened to the secrets of the king, or not to have betrayed them.

In the space of a few months the king detected this species of perfidy; he received positive proofs of it, for several circumstances were repeated to him which he had never mentioned except to Mademoiselle de Hautefort. He was equally exasperated both as a sovereign and a friend: he made no complaints, but Mademoiselle de Hautefort lost her place,

* Historical.

and was exiled from the court*. Louis again secluded himself in his own apartments, and became more gloomy and reserved than ever. About the same time he was involved in severe vexations, occasioned by the animosity of the queen-mother against Cardinal Richelieu. With warm passions, a shallow understanding, and boundless ambition, Mary de Medicis united absolute incapacity: she was equally weak and imperious. There was as much hastiness and levity in her disposition, as obstinacy in her passions: she suffered herself to be controuled by her affections, her favourites governed her, and she aspired to reign over France with despotic sway. Her ill temper and violence had early lost her the heart of her husband; her domineering character estranged from her a son naturally dutiful and affectionate; and this unreasonable ambition compelled the minister, who to

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* Historical.

her owed his elevation, to become her enemy. Richelieu, neglecting no means of appeasing her resentment, he had recourse to supplications, to submissions: he shed tears at her feet: the queen remained inflexible.* Louis, frightened, or rather weary of their quarrels, behaved neither like a son nor a master; he might have put an end to this domestic dissension by enjoining the queen, with all possible filial respect, and with the whole weight of the royal authority, to interfere no more in the affairs of the state. In vain he entreated: he durst not command, and he sacrificed his mother:* he had not the courage to speak for a moment with firmness, but enough to venture upon an odious rupture. Thus weakness, under a great variety of circumstances, adopts more violent resolutions than the most impetuons passions, which at least, after venting themselves,

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* Historical.

generally subside. Louis was well aware that the order which he was about to issue would enrage the queen to the highest degree; but her exile would relieve him from the embarrassment of facing scenes so truly disagreeable: he knew that the public voice would be raised against him; but he knew likewise that it would not reach his ear; in short, he resembled those who believed in the appearance of spirits: he was afraid of nothing but of *seeing and hearing*. Such is the absurdity of weak minds.

The king went to hide himself at one of his country seats, while a letter was sent in his name to Mary de Medicis, announcing her exile, and allowing her the choice of Compeigne, or of the castles of Angers, Nevers, and Moulins, for her residence. The disgrace of sovereigns of bad character is the more keenly felt, as it is almost always unexpected: weakness, which fears explanations above all things, shuns and prevents them by dis-

sembling, especially when it suffers itself to be persuaded to take some decisive step. Mary de Medicis was thunderstruck !...... Anne of Austria, when informed of the circumstance, beheld only an unhappy mother in the person of the princess by whom she had been persecuted ; she flew to her apartment, threw herself into her arms, wept with her, and promised to exert all her influence, small as it was, in her behalf. She kept her word ; but though her general conduct was irreproachable, she could not exert the powerful rights of an indulgent and tender wife (1) : her generosity appeared to Louis XIII a mere pretext maliciously laid hold of to censure his conduct, and he drily commanded her to be silent. A few days afterwards, the queen-mother, who had chosen Compeigne for her retirement, left it clandestinely, and went abroad. The courtiers assured Cardinal Richelieu, and the ministers repeated it to the king, that

Mary de Médicis being an object of public hatred excited no interest whatever, and that the whole nation approved a severity which the unbounded ambition of that princess rendered absolutely necessary for the tranquillity of the state. Louis had too much sense to be thoroughly convinced of the truth of this statement; but flattery, even when it fails to persuade, at least creates in the mind a kind of doubt which is always agreeable.

The queen-mother, in reality, had not hitherto enjoyed either the good-will or the esteem of the people. They could not forgive the widow of Henry the Great for not having appeared inconsolable at the most horrible and painful catastrophe recorded in the annals of the country; and all the hatred excited by her favourites had been transferred to herself. Her misfortune suddenly turned the public opinion in her favour: every person felt for the fate of an exile mother and a fugitive queen: the sympathy excited by illustri-

ous persons who suffer persecution is the more general, as it always furnishes occasion for censuring the persecutors. The people spared neither the king nor Cardinal Richelieu, whom they accused of the blackest ingratitude. They forgot that to Richelieu Mary de Medicis had formerly owed her reconciliation with Louis :* the queen-mother, it is true, had afterwards rendered him the most important services, but in all that she did for him she designed only to conclude a bargain, not to pay the debt with favours : she was desirous of governing in his name ; and one of the greatest statesmen that ever existed was taxed with ingratitude, because he refused to resign all the power with which he was entrusted into the hands of a capricious, hot-headed woman, without talents and without capacity.

While the king, more gloomy and reserved than ever, indulged his melancholy

* Historical.

in the privacy of his apartment, the young queen daily assembled around her all those persons belonging to the court who were most distinguished for their abilities and accomplishments.

Gaston, Duke of Orleans, the king's brother, a friend without courage or constancy, a prince without character, but easy, agreeable, and engaging in company;—the Count de Soissons, as remarkable for his valour, his beauty and his accomplishments, as he was interesting for the qualities of his heart;—Varicarville and Saint-Ibal, friends of that prince;—the Count de la Meillerage, the Marquis de Souvré, the Duke de Bellegarde, the Commander de Jars, who added to the celebrity resulting from extraordinary achievements, the rare merit of having displayed the most exalted character;—Chavigny, so cunning and so insinuating as to find means to please the queen, though he was devoted to the interest of Cardinal Richelieu;—the young Chabot, whom ambition and love had

even then secretly attached to Mademoiselle de Rohan;—the Princess Mary, daughter of the Duke of Mantua, and who was afterwards Queen of Poland;—Mademoiselle de Guise, whose beauty, dignity, and virtue were equally admired; —Mademoiselle de Vendôme;—the Marchioness de Beaumont, whose original way of thinking amused the queen;—the artful and beautiful Duchess de Montbazon;—the Duchess de Chevreuse, who disguising a profound ambition and passionate love of intrigue under the appearances of giddiness and levity, enjoyed the exclusive privilege of saying any thing without danger, and doing any thing without injury to her reputation: unaffected, indiscreet in matters of little consequence, her manners and her conversation replete with charms, banished all mistrust; but she was capable of keeping the most important secrets: in her pliancy was a particular art, for it never led her either into treachery or meanness: she had in the sequel intimate connexions in

all parties, yet she retained them all, and made them subservient to her designs, although she never betrayed a secret or a friend: it was by this address that she contrived to acquire such an extraordinary ascendancy over Cardinal Richelieu, and at the same time to win the entire confidence of Anne of Austria, whose favourite she became:* such were the persons who composed the circles of the queen.(2)

Some days after the escape of Mary de Medicis, the Princess Mary of Mantua asked the queen to give to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, to whose family she was attached, the yet vacant place of Mademoiselle de Hautefort. The queen, who no longer flattered herself that she should be able to procure the re-instatement of the latter, promised to apply in behalf of her friend to the king, who immediately gave his consent, pleased to find from this circumstance that the queen had relinquished all hopes of Mademoiselle de

* Historical.

Hautefort's recall. The Princess Mary hastened to convey the intelligence to the Countess de Brégi, aunt of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, to whom she supplied the place of mother.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was of an illustrious family, being the last descendant of the male issue of the famous Marshal de la Fayette, who in 1421 gained such glory at the battle of Baugé in Anjou, and who afterwards contributed by his valour and activity to the expulsion of the English from the kingdom.* Mademoiselle de la Fayette, an orphan from her cradle, was brought up by her aunt, the Countess of Brégi, who took her home from the convent at the age of fifteen years, and accustoming her by degrees to do the honours of her house, introduced her into the very best company. The countess was a widow, rich, and very old; she had no children, and doted on her niece, who was her only

* Historical.

heir. Mademoiselle de la Fayette combined with the most fascinating beauty every mental accomplishment and an unspotted reputation: she was now twenty-three years of age, and every body was astonished that she had not yet made choice of one from among the many suitors who solicited her hand. The Countess de Brégi had herself experienced the misery resulting from an unhappy marriage contracted when very young: she therefore allowed her niece to follow her own inclination, and instead of hurrying her to come to a decision, was continually exhorting her not to take any step without the most mature reflection.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was imbued with all the principles that a christian education and the most sincere and well-grounded religious sentiments are capable of imparting. She possessed a sound and cultivated understanding; a lively imagination; an elevated, generous, and exquisitely sensible soul. Her

ever equal, engaging and innocent gaiety; her modesty; the serenity of her look and demeanor, took from the perfection of her character every appearance of austerity. Her perfect purity was recognized in the tranquillity and peace which result from it, and which were conspicuous in her whole person. It was obvious that no passion had ever disturbed her soul; that always at peace with herself, she was as yet a stranger to internal conflicts, and that she had never experienced the agitations of pride and vanity. Every one soon felt perfectly at ease in her company: her conversation had a peculiar charm, because it was marked with that grace and pertinency which interest, and with that sweetness, and that absence of all affectation which fascinate and sooth. She possessed the gift, so inestimable in a woman, of pleasing without noise or shew: when she had enchanted all who had conversed with her, envy herself was not ruffled, and no one thought that she had shone. She found no difficulty

in excusing the faults of others, with which she was never more than half acquainted: a glance was sufficient to warn her not to think of them; just as we turn our eyes from a disagreeable object. There are qualities which we perceive at the first interview, and others which it requires penetration and a long intercourse to discover. Every one is struck with the brilliancy of a fine day; but it is only after some time that the genial influence of a healthy climate and pure atmosphere can be appreciated. Thus too it was with the admirable qualities which constituted the character of Mademoiselle de la Fayette: no shadow, no contrast caused one to appear more striking than another: it was impossible not to think Mademoiselle de la Fayette charming and accomplished, but it required time and a great deal of penetration to discover the full extent of her superiority. Nevertheless this female, though so perfect, had, on the very score of her character, more than one rock to dread, as she might more easily than

another rashly venture into a wrong track. She prized happiness at too high a rate: she was not aware that whatever is most simple is likewise most solid; that whatever is least subject to crosses is the best; and that exaggerated and romantic ideas on this subject have produced more errors, mistakes, and misfortunes, than the most vehement and dangerous passions. Mademoiselle de la Fayette had long come to the determination to bestow her hand on that man only who was superior to all others in elevation of character, or to one whom she should think capable of becoming so. Having no ambition on her own account, she felt that she should give unbounded latitude to that passion on behalf of the man to whom she should give her whole affection: accordingly she required in a husband fortitude, energy, greatness of soul, in short all the qualities that constitute a hero. This idea had taken such hold of her imagination, that she thought of nothing but the advice which she should once give to the *great*

*man* to whom she was to be united. How fondly she promised herself to exalt his love of glory! How she delighted in representing him as raising himself by his reputation above all his contemporaries. Dangerous reveries, which had but too powerful an influence on her destiny, and rendered her insensible to all the homage that she received! By a singular fatality, the Countess of Brégi could not help cherishing these chimerical notions of her niece. Extraordinary circumstances and great misfortunes had inflamed her imagination, and would not allow her to moderate the ardour of Mademoiselle de la Fayette's. She perceived in her so much discrétion in all the ordinary concerns of life, and so pure a soul, that she never took alarm at her vivacity on one single point, especially as on this head the countess herself entertained ideas still more extravagant. She fancied that she had done enough for reason and morality, by repeating to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, that love is by no means necessary in

marriage; but that as a woman gives herself a master when she marries, she ought to fix upon a man whom she can revere and admire, and that her happiness is proportionate to the degree of admiration which she feels for him. It is true, that to an elevated soul this profound admiration would be a thousand times preferable to love: but as a woman ought not to flatter herself that she shall meet with an object who deserves it, and who comes up to her wishes, it should likewise be observed, that in this union for life we ought to seek above all things such sentiments as being independent of the imagination are likely to last for ever; esteem, sympathy of tastes, of minds, and of characters. These truths are trivial; they present nothing striking; they nevertheless contain more sound sense than all the vain systems produced by enthusiasm: happy are those young females who are capable of appreciating them!

The age and health of Madame de Brégi gave her sufficient warning of her approach-

ing dissolution; she had been ill so long, that all about her, habituated to the sight of her sufferings, though they felt sincerely for her, were under no apprehensions. She alone was aware of the extreme danger of her condition, but never dropped a syllable on the subject. It was this secret conviction that excited in her a desire to obtain a place at court for her niece, in order that she might leave her a provision and a powerful protectress. The attachment of Mademoiselle de la Fayette to her aunt caused her at first to give a decided negative to this proposal: the countess was obliged to exert all her authority to gain her consent, and to invent family reasons in justification of the importance which she attached to the place in question. Mademoiselle de la Fayette complied, but with extreme reluctance: exclusively of the painful necessity of parting from her aunt, she had formed no very pleasing ideas of the court. She had frequently heard high praise bestowed on the queen, but all that she had learned

respecting the king only served to produce the strongest dislike of that prince and of a court governed by so weak a sovereign, who confining himself to the control over the interior of his palace, weakly relinquished the actual power to a vindictive, imperious, and despotic minister. If Louis XIII. had not displayed the most signal courage in war, Mademoiselle de la Fayette would have felt the highest contempt for him; but while she esteemed his valour, she censured his indolence, his cruelty (for she supposed that he had a bad heart), his conduct towards the queen and to his mother; finally, she was persuaded that he was totally destitute of intelligence, and cordially hated his character and person. How humiliating it is, she would observe to her aunt, to live under the sway of a sluggish monarch, who sees only with the eyes of his servants, who decides only with the judgment of others. It is not he who rewards; still less can he bestow encouragement; he has no voice, his opinion is

not asked, neither is any deference shewn to him: during the whole course of his reign obedience is paid only to the ministers and favourites whom caprice has recommended to his choice. I must confess, continued she, that I should wish to be excused this disagreeable presentation, for I am sure I shall feel the greatest pain when I see the king: but I shall not often have to undergo this trial, since he is more rarely seen at court than any other person belonging to it.

Such were the opinions and ideas of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, when she made her appearance at court. Madame de Brégi, who was too ill to go on the day of her presentation to Paris, where the court then resided, remained at her country-seat at Vincennes, about a mile and a half from the Faubourg Saint Antoine. It was agreed that Mademoiselle de la Fayette should return in the evening, and spend a few days longer with her aunt before she went to reside at court, when Madame de Brégi hoped to be able

to accompany her to Paris. It was the beginning of March. Mademoiselle de la Fayette repaired to court with the Princess Mary: she learned with pleasure that the king would not appear that day in public, and consequently that she should be exempted from the dreaded ceremony of presentation. The whole court admired the beauty of Mademoiselle de la Fayette and the charms which adorned her whole person: the queen received her with the most gracious condescension. On leaving the queen she was going to pay some customary visits in the palace, but in the galleries met a messenger who had come to seek her with the intelligence that the Countess de Brégi was dying, and desired to see her. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, overwhelmed with grief, immediately quitted the palace in equal haste and agitation. She threw herself into a carriage, and without losing time by going to a house which she occupied in Paris for the purpose of changing her splendid attire, she hurried to Vincennes. On her

arrival, having alighted from the carriage, the first object that met her eye was the venerable Vincent de Paul, that hero of religion and humanity, that confidant of all the charitable and pious who were then so numerous. Having been summoned by the expiring countess, whose friend he was, he went to the foot of the stairs to meet Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and fully prepared her for the painful spectacle which she was about to witness. "Ah, father!" exclaimed she, the tears trickling down her cheeks; "is there then no hope?"—"Her last moment is at hand."—"Gracious heaven! And is she apprised of her condition?"—"She insisted upon knowing, and that with precision. The virtuous Morin,* on being closely questioned by her, assured her two hours ago that she could not live over the day." "Good God!" "To her this

* A celebrated physician of that time, and a man of eminent piety. See the Eulogy on him by Fontenelle.

declaration was not a fearful sentence; no emotion was visible in her countenance: she affectionately thanked the communicator of this important intelligence, and taking a valuable diamond ring from her finger, requested him to accept it as a pledge of her esteem and gratitude.(3) She had already performed all the duties enjoined by religion; she has since looked over and signed some papers and given various orders, with equal composure and presence of mind: but come, mademoiselle, and receive her blessing; come and admire the fortitude and resignation which religion is capable of imparting." At these words, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, scarcely able to support herself, leaned sobbing on the arm of the worthy father, and proceeded with him to the lady's chamber. On entering the room she ran and fell on her knees beside the bed of her aunt, who, with an affectionate look, but with sweet serenity, bestowed on her the tenderest benedictions. Vincent de Paul then addressed the countess in these

words:—"To you, madam, all terrestrial pomp is now as nothing; you are now acquainted with the illusions of the world and the falsehood of its maxims; you are now left alone with memory and truth!... No human power can henceforth lend you aid or afford you support!...Those honours and those attentions which your fortune and rank commanded no longer exist for you!...But you have yet left a retinue, at this moment a thousand times as gratifying as that of the greatest monarchs of the earth, a retinue which will follow you to your last home, composed of the poor whom you have relieved, and of the orphans whom you have brought up!.... The interest and the good wishes of your relatives and friends can no longer avail you: but the feeble prayers of infancy, about to be preferred in your behalf, will rise to the throne of the Almighty!.... Come, children," continued he, "come and pray for your benefactress." At these words a door opened, twelve young children advanced, and falling on their

knees around the bed, with tears, unanimously ejaculated:— "*O God! have mercy on our mother. O God! reward the charity of our kind mother.*" At these pious invocations of gratitude, at these tears and sobs, the features of the countess suddenly brightened: never did more soothing harmony meet the ear of a dying person. With increased fervour she pressed to her heart a crucifix which she held in her embrace, for she prayed with redoubled confidence. A ray of celestial joy dispelled the shades of death from her brow, and raising her eyes towards heaven, she breathed her last with a sublime hope. Mademoiselle de la Fayette was forcibly conducted to her apartment, and there accidentally perceiving her figure in a glass, she shuddered on observing the brilliant dress, which was now to be succeeded by one of so melancholy a kind. As a sort of expiation, she vowed to wear mourning for her aunt two years, without any ornaments, in all the austere simplicity of the deepest mourning.

The Countess de Brégi, by her will, left several pious legacies, and bequeathed the residue of her property to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, to whom she recommended her poor pensioners and the unfortunate children entrusted to the care of the venerable Vincent de Paul: for these her niece undertook in future to provide. The countess likewise forbade every kind of parade at her funeral, on which point, as on every other, she was strictly obeyed; but her remains were followed to the grave by a retinue that eclipses the most pompous funeral processions, by sincerely sorrowing friends, and a great number of disconsolate poor and orphans.

The queen, at the request of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, granted her leave of absence for two months. This interval she spent at home with the friends of her aunt, and especially with Vincent de Paul: she never went abroad except to church, or to the meetings of the Ladies of Charity, at which Vincent, who was

then zealously engaged in the establishment of a hospital for foundlings, presided. These children were still distributed in private houses: no steps had yet been taken to collect them in one institution, but only to defray the expences of their maintenance, which amounted to upwards of forty thousand francs. The ladies had already contributed for them, and had besides given considerable sums towards the re-establishment of the Hotel Dieu. Vincent de Paul had it in contemplation to persuade them to fresh sacrifices *: he assembled all the ladies in a church, and delivered a discourse, in which he pleaded the cause of those unfortunate infants. His pulpit was surrounded by a throng of nurses holding his poor orphans in their arms. These children all at once began to cry. The preacher stopped short, and after a moment's silence thus resumed:—" Do you hear," said he, " the cries of these inno-

* Historical.

cent little creatures? It is you, ladies, whom they are imploring: you will not turn a deaf ear to these cries of nature which claim your maternal pity; you who have been mothers to these infants, you will not abandon them!"...The whole auditory dissolved into tears; and all the ladies, among whom was Mademoiselle de la Fayette, contributed and supplied the requisite sum*. Many of the courtiers likewise promoted this good work: one of them even devoted his whole property to the purpose. The Commander de Brulard-Sillery, who had been ambassador in Spain and Italy, and possessed a large fortune, opened his will in order to make himself the executor of it: he discharged his servants, on whom he settled pensions, and gave up his hotel. His patrimonial estate he preserved untouched for the natural heirs; but he sold all his furniture, plate, and jewels; and under the direction of Vincent de Paul, he

* Historical.

distributed among the poor the whole produce of this pious sale. Reserving for himself a small annuity just sufficient for his support, he transferred all the rest of his income to the hospitals founded, begun, or re-established by Vincent *. Several persons of this family have given examples of this admirable charity: the Soissonnois, during the last century, was full of their pious foundations †. In this house, now extinct, and which furnished the country with some eminent statesmen, humanity, benevolence, and courage, were hereditary virtues.

When Mademoiselle de la Fayette was capable of attending to business, she examined her aunt's papers; among which she found a manuscript in the handwriting of the deceased. This precious relic Mademoiselle de la Fayette opened with equal emotion and curiosity, and read as follows:

* Historical. See the Life of Saint Vincent, by Louis Abelly, Bishop of Rhodés, in 4to.

† Some traces of them still remain.

## HISTORY OF THE COUNTESS DE BREGI.

### WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

The first years of my youth passed amidst the storms and commotions occasioned by civil wars. Having had the misfortune to lose my parents in my infancy, I found a second mother in my eldest sister, Madeleine de Sénectère, widow of Guy Exuperi de Mimaumont, who was twelve years older than myself. She was not less distinguished for virtue and beauty than she rendered herself celebrated for heroic courage. She possessed a large fortune, and resided on her estate situated at Auvergne. After she became a widow, all the gentlemen of Auvergne and Burgundy aspired to her hand; but she declared that she would not marry any other than the man who should contribute most by his courage to clear her estates and the whole province of the leaguers: adding that she was determined to be herself the judge of their exploits, as she should put herself at

their head *. This extraordinary resolution was not without a parallel: in those days enthusiasm was the spring of every action, however noble, or however criminal. At this period the Duchess de Retz collected soldiers to defend her possessions, declared herself their commander, and displayed such resolution that the leaguers durst not attempt any enterprize against her *. In the same century a woman, named Constance du Barry, valiantly defended Leucate, and preserved that place for Henry the Great (1).

Sixty gentlemen formed themselves into a body to serve under the command of my sister, in hopes that after the war she would marry one of them. They took a solemn oath, by which they bound themselves to strive to surpass one another only in valour and generosity, to make no opposition to my sister's choice, and to remain closely united. Having all the same sentiments and the same

* Historical.

object, they adopted the same device, which was an armed warrior, with these words: "*For our God, our King, and our Lady.*"

Among these rival friends was one, who, on account of his youth, could not reasonably aspire to be the husband of my sister. This was young Brégi; he was only twenty years of age, and at this period I was fourteen. Brégi solicited my hand, and it was promised him: he was amiable, and I soon conceived a sincere attachment for him. All the attentions, all the praises, all the festivities of the party, were addressed exclusively to my sister: she was the object of universal enthusiasm. Among all these warriors Brégi was the only one who took any notice of me: I mistook gratitude and vanity for love; an error into which the female heart, even with more experience than I possessed, is very liable to fall. Under the conviction that I had conceived a strong passion for Brégi, I bound myself irrevocably by solemn engage-

ments, promising him that whatever might be the issue of the war, I would never be the wife of any other man. Nevertheless, I deeply regretted within my own breast that he had not yet distinguished himself by some brilliant exploit; but I consoled my mind with the consideration of his youth, and felt confident that in time he would acquire a brilliant reputation. I heard nothing talked of but war and heroic actions: my imagination was so inflamed, that I was desirous of attending my sister to battle. On receiving her positive refusal, I placed all my love of glory in the achievements of Brégi; I was jealous of all the exploits of the others: how could I do otherwise than believe that I was passionately in love with him? I would have sacrificed every drop of my blood for the satisfaction of seeing him surpass all his companions in arms.

It was about this time that the brave Montluc, who defended Sienna for the French, and whom the inhabitants ho-

noured with the title of dictator, after sustaining a siege of ten months, and being reduced to the utmost extremities by famine, accepted in behalf of the Siennese a capitulation which he refused for himself and his Frenchmen. *Never*, said he, *shall the name of Montluc be seen subscribed to a capitulation.** He declared, as is well known, that if the enemy would not suffer him to retire with his men without any writings or conditions, he would cut his way through them, certain of perishing, but at least with glory. The enemy not only allowed him to pass, but received him with marks of the highest esteem; in fact, the appearance of his band of pale, emaciated, and dying soldiers, proudly traversing the hostile camp, filled every heart with respect and admiration.† My soul was

* Historical.

† Historical. The general of the enemy was the Marquis de Maragnan. He went to meet Montluc, embraced him, and bestowed on him all the praises due to his courage.

fired by the recital of this action. Soon afterwards, Montluc, passing through Auvergne, stopped two days at our mansion. I beheld him with extraordinary emotion; and though I could not discover in him more intelligence or more pleasing qualities than in any other person, I yet felt that if he had loved me, and I had not been pre-engaged, I should have preferred him to every man that I knew. After the departure of this valiant officer, I long cherished the recollection of him, and could not dismiss him from my imagination till I had obtained a promise from Brégi that if ever he should have a place to defend he would in like manner say: *Never shall the name of Brégi be seen subscribed to a capitulation.* Accustomed to hear of nothing but war and politics, I had neither the timidity natural to my sex, nor that of my age: but I had a memory sufficiently strong, and sense enough to repeat with intelligence all the best things that were said on those grave subjects.

I was admired; my premature understanding was highly praised; but I had less perhaps than many other young females of fifteen, since these discussions inflamed my imagination, since they moreover prevented me from reflecting on the real duties of woman, and at the same time had a tendency to encourage presumption and temerity. I have since often thought, that had not religious principles been carefully instilled into me, this dangerous education would infallibly have poisoned my mind and corrupted my heart; but religion corrects and makes amends for all defects.

Meanwhile frequent engagements took place with the leaguers, and for some time their issue had been considerably in our favour. The rebels had a new leader, who, notwithstanding his youth, displayed not less genius for war than valour and activity. The most surprising actions were related concerning him: he was of noble birth, no more than twenty-four years of age, and his name

was Roquelaure. Notwithstanding my passion for warlike achievements, I felt no admiration for those of Roquelaure, because he was engaged in the service of a party who had forsaken their God and rebelled against their king.

In one of these conflicts, in which the enemy, who were superior in number, put our vassals to the rout, in spite of the intrepidity of my sister, and the valiant troop of lovers who constantly surrounded her, she rashly rushed into the midst of the enemy. In this movement her horse fell: in order to support herself she rested the point of her sword upon the ground, but the blade snapped in the middle. The soldiers laid hold of her with the intention of making her a prisoner, when Roquelaure came up, assisted to replace her on her horse, which was not hurt, and said: "You are at liberty, madam, we are not at war with ladies." My sister rejoined her little band, whose apprehensions subsided: they rallied round her; the battle was re-

newed, and continued till night without any decisive advantage on either side. From this day I remarked a great alteration in my sister's humour: she became absent, thoughtful and grave, she talked to me of nothing but Roquelaure, and her strong desire to gain over that young chieftain to the good cause. "What a conquest that would be!" said she: "heaven has perhaps reserved this glory for me. At least I ought to make the attempt; if it succeeds, how serviceable it would prove to the good cause." As a preliminary step, she sent to Roquelaure requesting a truce for three weeks; he complied; but all the young warriors belonging to our party disapproved this proceeding adopted without their consent; and contrary to my sister's expectation, no parleys took place. Unable to keep her secret any longer, my sister at length acknowledged that she had conceived an unconquerable and hopeless passion; in a word, that she had been deeply in love with Roquelaure

ever since the day on which the young warrior had so generously set her at liberty. This imprudent confidence served only to strengthen an unfortunate attachment; for from that moment my sister talked to me of nothing but Roquelaure, and excited in me the most anxious desire to become acquainted with, or at least to see him.

I availed myself of the truce to go to spend five or six days at a gentleman's seat at about twenty miles from our's: my sister did not accompany me, but consigned me to the care of a governess. I set out at day-break and arrived early. The owners of the mansion not having been apprized of my coming, were from home, but I was assured that they would certainly return in the course of the day.

It was now the month of September: the weather was warm and cloudy. I proposed to my governess to take a walk round the house. We had not rambled far, when, in a field skirted by a wood,

I saw a very deep ditch, the sides of which, forming a very gentle declivity, were covered with turf. At the bottom grew a prodigious quantity of very beautiful flowers, some of which I wished to gather. We got down without any difficulty: I gathered what flowers I chose, and clambered up again to return to the house. Just at the moment, when my head and arms were above the bank, a gun went off, and the ball wounded me in the left arm. Overpowered with horror, for I conceived that some one had designed to kill me, I sunk senseless on the brink of the ditch.

On recovering my senses I found myself in the house, lying upon a bed, and surrounded by several persons, who had rendered me all the assistance in their power: my arm was not broken; but the wound was severe. When I opened my eyes, one single object met my view, and rivetted my whole attention: this was a young man of a most prepossessing countenance, pale, and bathed in tears:

he was kneeling at the head of my bed. He accosted me in the most affecting language that grief can suggest: I listened to and gazed at him with inexpressible emotion, and notwithstanding the disorder and incoherence of his address, I at length collected, that being abroad shooting while I was gathering the flowers, he had just taken aim at a covey of partridges, at the very moment when I was coming up out of the ditch....This account deeply moved me: but what was my surprise to learn that this young man, so interesting and so tender, was no other than Roquelaure!.....That name made me shudder: he perceived it.

"Yes," replied he, "it is the name of an enemy, but of an enemy on whom you are revenged if you hate him. Oh!" continued he, "what words can describe the horror of the moment when I beheld your angelic figure rise all at once amidst a bush of flowers, and as suddenly drop from the effect of the mischievous ball discharged by my unfortunate hand!....I

flew to you, with the determination not to survive if you had been dead: I furiously pushed aside the woman who attended you; I took you in my arms, and brought you hither!.,..In short, Heaven be praised, your wound, which I dressed myself, is not dangerous, and will not be attended with any bad consequences; but I wish I could spare you the pain which it occasions."

This impassioned language astonished and profoundly affected me. I expressed my thanks in reply; and Roquelaure, apprehensive lest it might do me harm to prolong this conversation, entreated me to go to bed, and left me, saying that he would remain in my antichamber till the arrival of my sister, to whom he had dispatched a messenger. The idea of being present at an interview between my sister and Roquelaure gave me extreme anxiety, and a thousand vague inquietudes. I knew that Brégi was absent, and the certainty that he would not come along with her produced a secret

satisfaction, for which I did not endeavour to account.

As I had no fever I would not go to bed; seating myself, therefore, in an arm-chair, I listened attentively to what was passing in the adjoining room. Roquelaure was there, and from time to time I heard his voice. A surgeon, for whom he had sent to the little town of Aurillac, arrived in the evening. He removed the first dressing applied to my wound, and assured me that in ten or twelve days it would be perfectly healed. During this second dressing the pain was so severe as to make me cry out. Roquelaure in the utmost alarm hurried into my chamber, and I endeavoured as well as I could to pacify his apprehensions. He trembled to such a degree that he was obliged to support himself against the back of my chair. At this moment the door opened, and my sister ran towards me with extended arms. But the moment she saw Roquelaure she suddenly stopped; her arms, which were

stretched out to me, sunk; surprise, curiosity, and displeasure, were depicted in her countenance, and she was fixed motionless to the spot. She knew not as yet any of the circumstances of my accident, except that I had received a gun-shot wound in the arm. Not a word had been said to her respecting Roquelaure. She looked stedfastly at him; his sorrowful air, his eyes swimming in tears, betrayed but too visibly what was passing in his soul....The surgeon, and the women who were in my chamber, having retired, I fell about my sister's neck; but she received me with coldness, which I had never before experienced. Roquelaure briefly related how the affair had happened; and then, without giving her time to reply, thus proceeded:—"You know not, madam, the full extent of my misfortune!.....This day of horror and anxiety has for ever decided my fate; an acknowledgment which I determined not to make except in your presence. I adore your charming sister—" "Hold,"

cried my sister in the most imperious tone: "stop; this language from a Calvinist and a rebel is an insult; besides, my sister is already engaged; she has solemnly promised her hand. Brégi is her lover; and she is passionately attached to him." In this word *passionately*, there seemed to me to be a very offensive exaggeration; but I durst not contradict her. Roquelaure, thunderstruck at this intelligence, raised his eyes towards heaven, and after a moment's silence rejoined: "I am truly unfortunate; but what of that? I vow, nevertheless, to devote to her my thoughts and my life: I shall never see her more; but she will hear of me."...At these words my sister shrugged her shoulders with the most contemptuous expression. This action vexed me to such a degree as to dispel all the fear which her presence had excited. Roquelaure came up to me: "Farewell," said he, "be happy; but deign at least to tell me that I have your pity!"...."Yes, Roquelaure," I re-

plied, " rely upon my friendship, and the gratitude that I shall ever feel towards the generous deliverer of my sister. May heaven enlighten you, and restore you to the true religion and to your king !"..... " Be assured," he answered, " that notwithstanding the weakness and insolence of his effeminate minions, if Henry III. had a son, I would never have forsaken his banners; but he has long ceased to reign, and we have no heir to the throne; he has renounced glory and the tented field. I have quitted his degraded court, but should never have deserted from his camp. Nevertheless, if you desire it, I will return to my allegiance to him, as soon as I can do so without betraying the interests of my party, though I am ready to sacrifice my own to obey you in this particular. As to religion, I promise to procure instruction. On this point I cannot yield, except to conviction alone; I will anxiously and sincerel seek the truth, and if I find it conforma-

ble to your faith, it will be doubly dear to me."

This address excited in me an emotion which I took no pains to conceal. "Farewell, Roquelaure," said I, "my good wishes shall go along with you, and every day of my life I will pray to heaven in your behalf." So saying, I held out my hand to him; he grasped it, and dropping upon one knee, he kissed it, bedewed it with tears, and without uttering another word, abruptly rose, darted to the door, and disappeared. I sunk into a chair, and burst into tears. My sister then gave vent to her feelings. Spite, jealousy, and the vehemence of passion, entirely deprived her of the use of reason. Humbled, disappointed, exasperated, her grief was equalled only by her rage and her resentment. She accused me of imprudence and fickleness: with the keenest irony she ridiculed my childish credulity, my tender commiseration for a passion, of which,

as she declared, Roquelaure would think just as much as of his promises when he should have rejoined his troops. She added she was quite delighted that she had witnessed so ludicrous a scene, which had completely cured her of all the esteem she had conceived for this enemy of the good cause. Here, for the first time, I interrupted her. "What!" said I, "do you not esteem Roquelaure?"—"I think him perfectly despicable."—"He, despicable?"—"Yes, he! In my opinion there can be nothing more despicable than that levity with which he promised to betray his party, and to renounce his religion."—"He said expressly that he would not betray his party, and he has not promised to betray his religion; he has only given his word that he would seek instruction."—"Do you presume to defend a man who is a traitor to his king?"—"He is only misled: he is but twenty-four years of age."—"A heretic into the bargain?"—

"I have a presentiment of his conversion? magnanimity paves the way to it." "Is it possible to be at fifteen so audacious, so ungrateful, and so vain? for vanity alone can have instigated you to espouse the cause of this man, whom you so absurdly suppose to have conceived an ardent passion for you; and this idea makes you forget your lover, your king, your God!....Such, then, is the return you make for the education I have given you, and all that I have done for you!".... Her sobs now choked her utterance.....I rose, went up to her, and would have taken her by the hand, but she rudely repelled me: I began to feel unwell, and threw myself upon my bed. After a silence of a quarter of an hour, my sister, reflecting on the wound which I had received, and the powerful emotions which I had experienced, considered that such a scene might be attended with fatal consequences; she seated herself by my pillow, and spoke to me in terms

of soothing fondness. We embraced one another, mutually promising never to mention Roquelaure again.

The owners of the mansion arrived in the evening; my sister again had the mortification to hear Roquelaure spoken of in my presence, and that with the highest encomiums. M. D***, the master of the house, a venerable old man, had formerly rendered an important service to the father of Roquelaure, and the latter, out of gratitude for this kindness, had declared himself the protector of his little estate and of his tenants, whose property, through his interference, was spared by the rebels. A thousand anecdotes were told of his generosity, which were indelibly imprinted on my memory. M. D*** had several times invited him to hunt and shoot on his estate; but he had never availed himself of this permission till that very day. This conversation lasted the whole evening, notwithstanding all the endeavours of my sister to break it off, or to change the subject.

A violent attack of fever prevented my departure the following day: my sister was uneasy, and bestowed on me the most affectionate attentions. In three days I was so well that I was able to set out, and to take leave of our hosts.

On entering our mansion we met Brégi, who had just arrived. I felt a painful embarrassment at seeing him again: I still imagined that I loved him in preference to every other: my conscience had nothing to reproach me with, but my heart, more delicate and more enlightened, secretly warned me that I had reason to fear the penetration of Brégi....My sister gave him an account of my extraordinary adventure, carefully suppressing the sentiments which Roquelaure had manifested towards me, and Brégi never entertained the slightest suspicion of the matter.

The very day after our return, my sister positively declared that I should be united to Brégi before the expiration of the truce; though she had always told

me that he should not receive my hand till I had completed my seventeenth year, and I was not yet sixteen!

Every one was surprised at her precipitation, and Brégi took advantage of this disposition to entreat me not to oppose a a measure which would crown all his wishes. A month earlier I should certainly have insisted that, according to the first stipulation, he should wait till the conclusion of the war; but at this moment it seemed as if the least resistance on my part would be an imprudence, and the disclosure of a secret. I no longer possessed that frankness which springs from a heart that is free, and that has nothing to dissemble: I grew timorous and fearful; I agreed to the proposal, but the chaplain who was to have performed the ceremony was taken ill, and it was in consequence postponed.

Meanwhile my sister, swayed by a passion not less violent than unfortunate, astonished all about her by eccentricities in her behaviour, fits of ill-humour,

and gusts of passion, which had never before been observed in her. I no longer saw her alone; she avoided with extreme caution every interview of this kind; she manifested an extraordinary animosity against the insurgents, of whom she never spoke but in terms of contempt and indignation, declaring that she burned with impatience for the expiration of the armistice, that she might recommence operations, and complete the extermination of those odious heretics. Such were her expressions.

At length the war was renewed: the day before the first engagement my sister insisted that though the chaplain was yet ill, and unable to go to the church, that I should be betrothed in his chamber, and that the contract should be executed. After this ceremony my sister delivered a sword to Brégi, saying:— "May you with this weapon pierce the heart of the insolent leader of the rebels!"....These words made me shudder....the chamber was filled with the

gentlemen who served under my sister.... Brégi took the sword, saying: "I swear to seek Roquelaure, and to aim all my blows at him!"...."We swear the same unanimously!" exclaimed all the other warriors...."Roquelaure shall perish! Roquelaure shall perish!"....At this name, at this terrible denunciation, I observed the unfortunate creature turn pale, who would have laid down her life to save that of this rebel against whom her hopeless love had just kindled this frantic fury....I, felt my blood chilled in my veins; I would have retired, but Brégi detained me. "Let me go," said I, "let me go: I respect valour, but I abhor ferocity." With these words I disengaged myself, and ran and shut myself up in my apartment.

My sister passed the whole night in the most dreadful agitation: her women told me the next morning that she never went to bed, but had walked the greater part of the night in the ancestral hall (as we called an extensive gallery filled with

family portraits); that she went out two hours before day-break, saying:—"To-day I shall be killed, I will go and pray;" that she accordingly repaired to the chapel, and in about an hour went and awoke the chaplain, to whom she confessed herself. At six o'clock she ordered her horse that she might go to the fight. I rose and went to embrace her, but her looks terrified me: there was a wildness in her eyes which it is impossible for me to describe. She pressed my hand, and said in a very low tone:—"I forgive him; pray for him." She then mounted her horse and departed.

Oppressed with the most gloomy presentiments, I spent the day in tears, and found no relief but in praying to God with all the women belonging to the mansion; but towards evening we paused every moment, imagining that we heard the sound of a horse's feet. I flew to the window, or ran down to the court yard, and went as far as the draw-bridge: I listened, and always fancied that I heard

the din of arms at a distance. . . . Sometimes I imagined that some bad news had been received and was kept from my knowledge. I questioned all the servants, who, to dispel my fears, assured me that we had the advantage over the enemy in point of number: they exaggerated this advantage, and I burst into tears. . . . I was certainly uneasy on account of Brégi, and more especially about my sister; but my heart was racked also by another apprehension, which I was obliged to conceal; while I was obliged to listen to the wishes which all about me were expressing for the defeat and destruction of the generous Roquelaure. "At least," said I, "do not wish for his death; such a wish is impious and reprobated by religion." At seven at night a messenger at length arrived with the most disastrous tidings. After some preparation I was informed that on this day my sister had exposed herself to danger with inconceivable temerity, and had received a wound in the side, which did not seem to be danger-

ous; that Brégi, who with the utmost intrepidity had persisted in singling out and attacking Roquelaure, had been vanquished, disarmed by him, and taken prisoner; lastly, that great numbers had fallen on both sides; that the enemy was victorious; that we had nevertheless effected our retreat in good order, and that our adversaries, who had engaged with very inferior numbers, had lost so many men, that notwithstanding this advantage, they would be unable to keep the field because they were in want of reinforcements, with which our army could be immediately supplied. I was assured that Brégi was not wounded, so that my sister was now the only object of my anxiety: I was preparing to take horse to go and meet her, when I heard a great noise of horses approaching, and the draw-bridge let down. It was she, accompanied by our principal warriors. I flew towards my sister; she was dejected and in pain, but her looks bespoke resignation and composure: she received me

if not with affection, at least with kindness. I conducted her to her chamber; she went to bed: a surgeon examined her wounds (for she had several), and he assured me that I need not be uneasy. She shewed me a wound which she had received in the thigh, saying that it was inflicted in the heat of the battle by *the hand of Roquelaure*, adding, with a sarcastic smile:—"*this will not draw any tears from his eyes!*"...... and, without giving me time to reply, she ordered me to retire. I offered to sit up with her; but she drily repeated her order to go to bed, and I obeyed. I had got to the door of her chamber, when she called me back and looked me full in the face. "You must be very uneasy, I suppose," said she, "about poor Brégi." "He is not wounded, I understand?" "I do not know, but he fought with such intrepidity that he can scarcely help being so; at any rate he is a prisoner, and in the power of an enemy, of a rival." "On that very account he will be the better treated."

"What an opinion you have of that man! Beware of him ... but now go, leave me." So saying she drew her curtain. I answered only with a deep sigh, and retired. I was so agitated that I had no hopes of being able to sleep a wink all night, and threw myself, without undressing, upon my bed. At six in the morning my maid entered my chamber, crying out that Brégi was come. I ran immediately into the passage, where I met Brégi, and went with him into a room.—He informed me that Roquelaure, when he learnt his name, and that he was on the eve of marriage with me, had instantly set him at liberty, and refused every kind of ransom.* "This magnanimous foe," continued Brégi, "has blended with this generous procedure a chivalrous gallantry which augments its merit. Here is a note, which he requested me to deliver to you." At these words, moved to the very bottom of my soul, I took the paper with a trembling hand, and read as follows:—

* Historical.

"I restore to you the man whom you love! I will not be the disturber of happiness, a jewel very rarely met with in the toilsome pilgrimage of this dreary life, in which so many anguished hearts groan without hope and without consolation. That you may both enjoy uninterrupted happiness, is the sincere wish of

ROQUELAURE."

Just as I had finished reading this affecting note, a servant came to tell us that my sister, having heard of Brégi's return, desired to see us both; we therefore repaired to her apartment. I perceived an alteration in her looks, which struck me, but the surgeon entertained no apprehensions. She questioned Brégi, who repeated the account which he had given me, adding a great many other circumstances. "I must confess," continued he, "that I never saw a man for whom I felt so much esteem: in his whole person there is a dignity which

bespeaks the elevation of his soul, and at the same time a tincture of melancholy and a tenderness which are powerfully interesting. He spoke to me concerning you," said Brégi, turning to me, "and of the pain he suffered on account of the accident to which you had nearly fallen a victim. I told him that you had perfectly recovered from it: he replied he knew that, because he had taken the necessary precautions to be informed of your condition. He repeated that after such an event, he considered it his duty to seize an opportunity of rendering you a service; but he particularly desired me to assure you, that even supposing this unlucky accident had never happened, he should not have hesitated to send back to you the husband of your choice. In short, I never witnessed such kindness, such generosity. I could not help observing how deeply I regretted that he was engaged in so bad a cause. 'I shall forsake it,' replied he, 'as soon as I can do so with honour; I have promised I

would, and this engagement I hold sacred."

During this relation, every word of which penetrated to the bottom of my heart, the agitation of my unhappy sister was inexpressible: I observed her several times change colour. Notwithstanding the too lively interest which I took in this recital, I could have wished it had been in my power to silence Brégi, who was at length interrupted by my sister. "Without doubt," said she, while her feelings frequently checked her utterance, "he could not speak to you concerning me but with horror?"—"By no means," answered Brégi; "nay, he even highly admires your courage: he calls you a heroine; but he knows that you hate him."—"That I hate him!"—"Yes, and indeed you are wrong: it is carrying the spirit of party to too great lengths."..... At this moment the surgeon entered, felt my sister's pulse, and told us that she was feverish, and that our conversations did her harm. Alas! I knew it

but too well already. He sent us out of her chamber. I got rid of Brégi, under the pretext that having passed a sleepless night I had need of rest. I ran and shut myself in a closet, where, without molestation, I could give a free vent to my sorrows. For more than an hour I shed bitter tears, without having one single distinct idea. I was deeply sensible of my misfortunes: their weight oppressed me the more as I had never yet had courage to look them in the face, but shrunk from the very thoughts of them. At length I probed my heart, and there I found a guilty and insensate passion for an object from whom every thing concurred to separate me, and that too when I had plighted my faith to another! .... Each succeeding reflection aggravated my distress. I was the rival of a sister, a benefactress, whom her jealousy would perhaps consign to the tomb.... How was I to sooth her misery, raised as it was to the highest pitch! My presence was hateful to her;

I was afraid of speaking to her; she refused my attentions; I had neither guide nor adviser.... In the midst of these melancholy reflections, I read Roquelaure's note again; and this affecting pledge of a love so delicate and so generous aggravated my grief, by increasing my gratitude and my admiration. "O Roquelaure!" I exclaimed, "it is I—I alone, who am *without hope*, as well as *without consolation*. Thou hast nothing to reproach thyself with: thy noble heart was free; thou hadst a right to dispose of it. Thou wilt not be compelled to contract a hateful alliance; thou at least enjoyest thy generosity; the remembrance of me will not be accompanied with aught that should tinge thy cheek; thou hast tasted the felicity of hoping for a moment, and of declaring thy sentiments to the object of thy preference; finally, glory will make thee amends worthy of thy great soul, while I, unhappy wretch, must conceal a criminal passion which thou shalt never have known of, while I shall

be the prey of torments and remorse, without being able to hope for thy pity."

In these painful reflections I was indulging when the surgeon came to inform me that he began to be uneasy at the state of my sister, and that her fever began to assume an alarming character: he added that she was inquiring for me. I went to her immediately. She sent away her women, and desired me to sit down within the curtains of her bed. She was so oppressed that it was some moments before she could speak: at length she asked me if I had preserved Roquelaure's note. I replied that I still had it. "What!" exclaimed she, "when you have plighted your faith to another!"— "Brégi himself has read the note, which was not sealed."—"Brégi has read it! but was he aware of its real signification? For the rest, you are still free; and if your heart is changed, if you feel disinclined to the match, you may still break it off; as your guardian, I allow and authorize you to do it." These words she

uttered with an effort which proved to me how dear this kind of indulgence and generosity cost her..... "No!" cried I, "no, I will keep my word. The chaplain can leave his room; to-morrow, the first thing in the morning, I will marry Brégi!"..... At these words my sister threw both her arms about my neck, and pressed me with transport to her bosom. Our tears mingled together. This moment, which irrevocably fixed my fate, and destroyed the happiness of my whole future life, was nevertheless productive of some satisfaction to me. I had given my unfortunate sister the only consolation which she could possibly receive. I felt my resolution strengthened, and my grief become less poignant; and such will always be the happy fruits of a virtuous sacrifice. In a few minutes my sister, inclining her face towards my ear, whispered: "I should like to see his writing." I had no difficulty to guess that she wished to read Roquelaure's note. I took it from my bosom and gave it to

her. Her hands trembled so violently that she could scarcely hold it. She read it more than once to herself, and then returned it wet with her tears. I took it and tore it in pieces. "Ah! what are you doing?" cried she. "It is my duty," answered I, "to forget its contents; to think of them to-morrow would be a crime. Brégi shall be my husband. "O, my dear girl!" she exclaimed, "that I had possessed the same command over myself! In that case I should not now be the victim of a passion which is hurrying me to the grave. No positive duty indeed forbade it; but it was such as reason could not approve. Instead of banishing a dangerous idea from my imagination, I suffered myself to be absorbed by it. I made it the subject of all my reveries, and of the most chimerical hopes.

"I had soon but one single thought, to which all my plans and all my actions were subordinate; my sensibility was inflamed, my reason clouded; all the

other soft affections which had till then constituted the delight of my life, were weakened; nay, I imagined that they were wholly extinguished in my heart, because I compared them with that impetuous passion which there reigned with sovereign sway. Lastly, a cruel jealousy infinitely aggravated my pangs. You have just dispelled its most tormenting fears; and now I feel that I slandered my heart, when I fancied that I had ceased to love you. Ah! may the spectacle of a vehement passion, and of the injustice and evils which it produces, be at least a wholesome lesson to you; and be assured that it is impossible for a female to fall into this species of insanity except by an inexcusable weakness, and when she has made no effort to retain the command over herself." Deeply affected while listening to this painful and impressive confession, I embraced my sister, and offered every consolation that my tenderness could suggest. She seemed to grow more composed; and I flattered

myself that this conversation, by soothing her sorrows, would contribute to her recovery.

From that moment I determined to banish Roquelaure from my memory for ever; to think, thenceforward, of nothing but the good qualities of Brégi and my duty; to avoid being left alone with my own heart; above all, to shun indolence, and to throw myself into the arms of religion, who strengthens the weak, who blesses pure intentions, and whose divine precepts are capable of supplying the want of experience, by preserving us from that levity which leads us into errors.

The next morning I rose at the first dawn of day, and inquired concerning my sister. I was told that she had passed a bad night, but had been asleep about an hour. I had, the preceding evening, communicated my intentions to Brégi, who, overjoyed, came to conduct me to the chapel. My dejection, and the redness of my eyes, afflicted, but without surprising him. My sister's condition might

but too well account for the extreme depression of my spirits... I went to the foot of the altar to pronounce the irrevocable vow! I promised, from the bottom of my soul, attachment and constancy: religion required nothing more. I prayed that I might be happy; or, in other words, for peace of heart and virtue.

On leaving the chapel, we went to my sister, and presented my husband to her. She received me with open arms: her caresses gave me pain... This wa the first emotion that I had to stifle in the recesses of my heart.... But this unfortunate sister soon engaged my whole attention... She continued to grow visibly worse; and a physician, whom I sent for the first day, and who only came that morning, declared that she was in danger. My grief was inexpressible; but it was infinitely heightened, when, the same evening, the physician told us he had no hopes of saving her life. She desired that the sacraments might be administered, and received them with the most impressive

piety. I passed the night in her chamber. An hour before day-light she wrote a few lines. She then ordered all the attendants to leave the room; and, calling me, directed me to sit down, and listen to what she should say. She held in her hand a small crucifix, of which the cross was lapis lazuli, enriched with diamonds, and the Christ of gold. This she shewed to me, saying, "I have disposed of this crucifix, which was given me by our mother. Roquelaure will renounce his errors! ... Promise me to send him this crucifix with that paper!" .... As she uttered these words, she delivered to me a note, which she ordered me to read. It was as follows:

"In a few moments I shall be no more! ... A consolatory presentiment, a sudden light, mitigate for me all the horrors of death! You will soon abjure your fatal errors. O Roquelaure! the wishes of the dying are sacred. Let the first profession of faith, on your conver-

sion, be pronounced at the foot of this cross, upon which I shall presently exhale my last breath!"

After reading this note, I fell on my knees, shedding a torrent of tears. My sister took both my hands in her's, and pressed them to her heart with the warmest affection. I solemnly promised to fulfil her last injunctions: she embraced and blessed me: she energetically recommended my happiness to Brégi; and from that moment every thing in her announced perfect composure and resignation. In a few minutes she expired in my arms.

My grief knew no bounds; religion alone was capable of moderating its excess. Brégi undertook the melancholy duty of paying the last honours to my unfortunate sister. In the funeral ceremonies there was a pomp and a singularity which drew together all the persons of consequence in Auvergne, who, moreover, owed this homage to her me-

mory for the courage which she had displayed in delivering the province from the violence and depredations of the rebels. All the warriors whom love and hope had armed in the good cause, and assembled under its banners, appeared in the procession: a crown of laurel and her sword were laid upon the coffin. On the marble monument was engraved a Latin inscription, to this effect:

"She was at once the example and the model of pure virgins, of virtuous wives, and of intrepid warriors."

Meanwhile I was not unmindful of the order which she had given me when expiring; but how was it to be executed? I was determined to have no direct communication with Roquelaure; and besides, I knew that he had left the province. After mature reflexion, I thought it best to employ Brégi to execute this sacred injunction. I acquainted him with the secret of the unfortunate passion which my sister had conceived for Roquelaure, and delivered to him the note and

the crucifix. Brégi thought it perfectly natural that my sister should have carefully concealed a passion which would have inflamed the hatred of so many rivals devoted to her service, and who had been taught to hope that she would not chuse a husband except out of their number... He promised that he would find means to transmit, in secret, to Roquelaure, this affecting and sacred pledge of such an ill-fated passion. He was of opinion that the peace would bring Roquelaure to Paris and to court; and as we were also to be there in a short time, it was determined that we should wait.

My sister had left me her whole fortune. Business detained us near two months in Auvergne; but at length we set out for Paris. We went to take leave of M. D***, whose mansion I could not visit without emotion. Passing near the ditch where I had gathered the flowers and received the wound, I perceived, with surprise, that on the spot had been

erected a pillar of white marble, with this inscription:—*In expiation of an involuntary crime, and to found a perpetual memorial, there will be given at this place, every year, on the 8th of September, at eleven o'clock in the morning, the sum of fifty crowns, and a nosegay of the wild-flowers which grow in the ditch about this column, to the most virtuous, most irreproachable, and poorest village girl of this district.* Roquelaure, before his departure, had erected this pillar, and provided for the continuance of the gift for ever.'

This ingenious contrivance, and this affecting recollection, revived in my heart sentiments yet scarcely stifled. Brégi designed to spend a few days at the house of M. D***; but I dissuaded him from that intention. The place renewed impressions that were extremely painful; and each moment seemed to aggravate my perturbation and chagrin. We proceeded thence to Aurillac: there we saw the renowned Guy de Veire, who, a few years before, having been chosen by

the inhabitants, from among the lowest class of the people, to defend the town against the Calvinists, saved it by his courage, and was ennobled for his meritorious conduct on this occasion *.

The treaty between Henry III. and the king of Navarre did not put an end to the war amongst all the parties: some yet continued in arms. Roquelaure joined that of the king, and obtained a commission in the corps commanded by the brave Lanoue, into which Brégi likewise entered. Being continually in the company of Roquelaure, he assured him of the high esteem which he had conceived for him, and eagerly sought his friendship. With equal emotion and astonishment Roquelaure received the crucifix and my sister's note from his hands. When I first delivered these to Brégi, I positively declared to him, that, considering Roquelaure as the cause of my unfortunate sister's death, it would

* Historical.

be impossible for me to endure the sight of him; that I could not even hear his name uttered without pain; and that I was determined never to admit him into my house. Brégi was grieved at this resolution; but told me he had perceived that I harboured this kind of resentment, which he thought unjust, since Roquelaure had nothing to reproach himself with: "Nevertheless," added he, "I will not lay you under any constraint; I will not bring Roquelaure to you, and will avoid all mention of him in your presence."

A few months afterwards I learned with sorrow that we were likely to have more fighting. Henry III. appointed Lanoue to the command of two thousand men under the Duke de Longueville. But the supplies of money failed: Lanoue flew to Compiègne: the tradesmen refused to deliver the provisions and stores which he wanted to throw into Senlis on any other terms than for ready money. Lanoue applied to some of the farmers of the revenue, and from them also he received a

denial. "*Well, well,*" said he, "*then I must defray the expence myself: let those keep their money who value it more than honour.*" Lanoue actually mortgaged all his estates to raise the necessary supplies. I am fond of recording such anecdotes, because they are particularly characteristic of our nation; among the French the most generous disinterestedness always goes hand in hand with the most distinguished valour; and yet Henry III. the prince who was thus served, was neither possessed nor was worthy of the love of his subjects. But what signifies it? In a monarchy ought not every man of honour to support the throne? How many actions of this kind have we not witnessed. We had already seen Marshal de Brissac, who commanded in Piedmont, mortgage and sell his estates, break off the marriage of his daughter, and apply her dowry to the purpose of paying the troops, and of reimbursing the merchants, who upon his word had advanced supplies. * We have since seen the virtu-

ous Sully cut down and sell his timber in order to provide for the expences of the war, and a Crillon, a Bassompierre, and many other illustrious warriors, offer and give all that they possessed in times of urgent public distress. (5)

Meanwhile frequent skirmishes took place before Senlis. Roquelaure, who at Paris had received the demonstrations of friendship and the advances of Brégi, if not with coldness, at least with extreme reserve, never quitted him in battle, and watched over his welfare with all the affection of the most intimate friend. I had remained at Paris, a prey to anxieties the more afflicting, as I durst not more than half avow them to myself. I had the tenderest friendship for Brégi: this attachment and duty would speedily have triumphed over an unfortunate sentiment, had not every thing, by an unaccountable fatality, conspired to recall incessantly to my mind, and to exhibit in the most interesting points of view, that very object which I was most solicitous to banish

from my thoughts. One day, when I was shut up alone in my closet, in greater agitation and uneasiness than ever, a servant announced the arrival of a messenger, who brought me the following letter from Brégi.

"I owed my liberty to Roquelaure, and now I am indebted to him for my life, which he has saved at the hazard of his own. In the late action he has received a very severe wound, but which, God be thanked, is not at all dangerous. I flatter myself that you will not think it strange if I shall henceforth be devoted till death to this incomparable man, so magnanimous in his conduct, so heroic in his friendship. I should entreat you to overcome your aversion to the sight of him, had he not himself conceived a similar repugnance, since he became acquainted with the sentiments which your unhappy sister entertained for him: because, as he told me, he was sure you could not see him without pain. I must own I have endeavoured to remove this idea, but in

vain: I hope, however, that in time I shall succeed. I shall not be completely happy till I enjoy the inexpressible satisfaction of finding myself at home, between an adored wife, and a friend so worthy of my love and admiration."

This letter excited a thousand contending sentiments. It raised my gratitude and esteem for Roquelaure to the highest pitch, for I could not doubt that in all he did for Brégi he was influenced solely by a desire to promote my happiness; and how was it possible not to entertain the warmest admiration for that héroic generosity and delicacy which caused him to refuse opportunities of seeing me. I was pleased with Brégi for his enthusiasm and his attachment to such a man; but at the same time, when I considered the secret motives of Roquelaure's actions, I could not help feeling a sort of confusion, which was very much like remorse, when I saw Brégi dote to such excess upon one who in the bottom of his soul was his rival. When I heard him complain of my dis-

like of Roquelaure, it seemed as if we were both deluding him: I felt I had reason to be glad that I had been able to conceal my sentiments from Roquelaure; and yet I was vexed that he should be ignorant of them. "Were he acquainted with them," thought I, "he would feel the higher esteem for my conduct; all these painful efforts, all these sacrifices would not be thrown away; Roquelaure would admire them: all these tears would be less bitter, for I should have his pity... Besides, he would himself be less wretched. Oh! how can he suppose that I can be insensible to such magnanimity! he must consequently believe me to possess an ordinary soul...Alas! he thinks that my heart was pre-occupied by a vehement passion, he, who so well knows the inviolable fidelity of genuine love!...My secret, carried to the tomb, will therefore be buried in the everlasting silence of death."

These reflexions rent my heart, and I found it every day more and more dif-

ficult to prevent them from obtruding themselves on my mind.

The genius and bravery of Lanoue soon relieved me from the most cruel of my alarms. The Duke de Longueville, who had the chief command, and who was thoroughly sensible of the talents of Lanoue, now matured by experience, resigned his authority to the latter, and determined to fight under him like any other officer.* Lanoue, with eight hundred horse and fifteen hundred foot, defeated an army of twelve thousand men, and saved Senlis. Immediately after the battle, several officers came to him to receive his instructions. "Go to M. de Longueville for orders," said he; and then went and gave back the command which he had lent him for a few hours.†

How great was my satisfaction on hearing these happy tidings, and at the same time that Brégi had distinguished

* Historical. † Historical.

himself by his intrepidity, and that Roquelaure, in this memorable victory, had displayed equal intelligence, talent, and valour...I was sincerely rejoiced to see my husband again: I firmly resolved to think of him alone; but he was incessantly talking to me of Roquelaure: his friendship for him had become one of the strongest sentiments of his heart. In a few months he informed me that Roquelaure, who had for a year been receiving instruction in the truths of religion, was going to renounce the errors of Calvinism. To me this circumstance afforded the most powerful and soothing consolation: there was every reason to believe that the great soul of Roquelaure had yielded to conviction alone; but to me he owed the sudden resolution of receiving instruction; but for me he would perhaps never have come to this determination, or at least his conversion would have been postponed to a much later period. It seemed to me as if his recantation, by expiating my weakness, purified our sen-

timents of all that was criminal and profane, and that it for ever formed a fraternal and sacred tie between us. Brégi, being invited by him to the ceremony, which was to be performed with great solemnity, wished to make him a present of a beautiful catholic prayer-book. "You have one," said he to me, "that is truly splendid, for the excellence of the miniatures and the magnificence of the binding: you would second the last wishes of your sister by allowing me to have it to present to him in your name, and after all that he has done for me, this gift would be highly appropriate." This proposal was but too much in unison with the secret feelings of my heart for it to be possible for me to reject it. Brégi pressed me to write a sentence on a blank page of this book; and I accordingly wrote these words from the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy:— *Thou shalt consider in thine heart that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.*

Brégi, well pleased with his success,

took the book and set out with it for the church where the ceremony was to take place, while I shut myself up in my oratory; and never did I pray to God with greater confidence and fervour. I thought of Roquelaure without remorse and without confusion: I represented his person to myself without danger: I saw him at the foot of the altar: I heard him join me to invoke him who strengthens the weak, him who imparts strength to conquer the passions. Methought a divine hand now purified my heart, healed all its wounds, and restored to it the delicious tranquillity of innocence. To me Roquelaure was now but a beloved brother! "O thou, who through me art brought back to the true religion," I exclaimed, "thou oughtst to be thankful to heaven for the accident which brought us together! I shall have cost thee some sighs during the rapid course of this frail and transient life, but thou wilt bless me in eternity: in this world every thing has conspired to sepa-

rate us, but the oath which thou art this moment pronouncing will unite us for ever in the abodes of bliss. Let no unworthy thought henceforth mingle with such exalted ideas and profane so sacred a friendship. Yes, I feel that I am a partaker of the divine grace which God bestows on the new convert, and which thou art this moment receiving. The faith which thou embracest, the light which sheds its influence upon thee, operate also upon my heart; they raise me above myself...Oh! have not I also fatal errors to renounce!...O, Roquelaure! O, my brother! I vow never more to think of thee but in the presence of God, of that supreme judge of the purity of our sentiments! Yes, I will shun thee without a pang: I will perform my duty with cheerfulness, with joy; I shall be happy through virtue, I shall derive ineffable satisfaction from the consciousness of innocence. Far be from me unruly wishes, secret complaints, criminal

and superfluous regret!...I do more than submit, I embrace with transport so noble a destiny."

This enthusiasm was sincere, and it had an extraordinary influence on my sentiments and situation. If I have since felt some secret emotions which it has been my duty to repress, it has at least cost me but little to stifle them, and they have never disturbed the happiness of my union with Brégi. From that moment I made it my whole study to please my husband, and to strengthen the esteem which was due to his excellent qualities. An infallible method of kindling in our bosoms an ardent attachment to those whom duty commands us to love is to devote ourselves to their happiness: we soon conceive an affection for objects which engage our constant attention; to bestow this constant attention we must be continually thinking of them; and how is it possible to forbear loving when we excite profound gratitude, and deserve that return?

As soon as the ceremony of Roquelaure's recantation was over, Brégi came back to me. He told me that Roquelaure had received my prayer-book with extreme emotion, and desired him to say that he would read a prayer in it every day, and would keep it most carefully as long as he lived. Brégi added that Roquelaure during the whole ceremony had displayed the sincerest piety and devotion. I thanked God from the bottom of my soul, and secretly commended myself for having for the first time heard Roquelaure's name uttered without pain and agitation.

Some time afterwards Brégi conceived the idea of procuring Roquelaure a very advantageous establishment, by bringing about a match between him and a young widow, Madame de L***, who was a friend of mine, and possessed an immense fortune. I approved the plan. Madame de L*** was a woman of illustrious birth, great beauty, and irreproachable character. I undertook to speak to

her concerning Roquelaure; I related to her all that he had done for Brégi. I succeeded in interesting her to such a degree, that she was anxious to see him, and soon confessed that if she were beloved by him she should prefer him to every other man with whom she was acquainted.

Brégi, who was delighted to think how agreeably he should surprize his friend, had not communicated our design to him; but when the business was sufficiently matured, he proposed to me to speak to her; "For I know Roquelaure," continued he: "the fortune of Madame de L***, and the advantages of this alliance, will not be sufficient inducements with him. Exclusively of the austerity of his principles, and the delicacy of his sentiments, I know that he is strongly attached to liberty, and that he will never sacrifice it for a woman for whose virtues and whose character he has not a profound esteem. Madame de L*** is your friend; you are more intimate with her than I am; it is therefore your

province to pronounce her panegyric, and you alone can fix the determination of Roquelaure. Consider, moreover, that you cannot refuse the visits of the husband of your friend."—" No, certainly," I replied, " when he is so; but this match is yet uncertain, and as I am thoroughly convinced that such an interview would be useless, because you may say every thing that I can, relieve me from the pain of unnecessarily seeing a man to whom I ascribe the death of my sister. I esteem him, and am sincerely interested in his welfare: but his presence would revive disagreeable recollections, and give me real pain." Brégi urged me no farther; his resolution was taken. He left me, and went straight to Roquelaure. He assured him that I wished to speak with him immediately on an affair of importance. Roquelaure, surprised and confounded, in vain enquired what I could want; Brégi hurried him away, and brought him to me.

How great was my surprise when my

door opened abruptly, and Brégi suddenly entered, followed by Roquelaure. At this unexpected appearance my heart palpitated with such violence that I thought I should have fainted; I attempted to rise, but fell back on my chair. "Ah! Brégi," exclaimed Roquelaure, "you have deceived me; she did not want me; she did not expect me...." With these words he turned back, and was going towards the door, when Brégi detained him. I could not endure the idea that he should attribute the state in which he saw me to antipathy, and perhaps to the most unjust and extravagant hatred: this idea gave me fresh strength, and I called him back. "Believe me," said I, "notwithstanding the painful recollections which your presence renews, notwithstanding acute regret occasioned by the unhappy end of a sister and a benefactress, I am deeply sensible how much I owe you, and share the gratitude and all the sentiments of your friend...." Brégi was delighted with the peaceful

tenor of this address, for which he tenderly thanked me. His thanks made me blush, and threw me into as much confusion as ever. I looked trembling at Roquelaure; our eyes met, and the expression of his made me shudder. He turned pale, and rested against the chimney-piece. In this moment, which it is impossible to describe, I was overpowered by an inexpressible feeling of mingled confusion, remorse, and secret joy... It seemed as if I had revealed every thing, as if Roquelaure had heard and answered me. I was confounded and overwhelmed. Brégi resumed to assure Roquelaure that after this first interview I should not be so strange. "No, no," replied Roquelaure, "there are impressions which time cannot weaken." I made a violent effort over myself to interrupt this conversation, and reminded Brégi that it was time to inform his friend of our hopes and plans in regard to him. Upon this Brégi explained the business in a long address, to which I added a high panegyric on Ma-

dame de L***. Roquelaure listened to us with icy coldness; then addressing me, "May I venture, madam," said he, with mingled emotion and earnestness, "to ask if this strange idea originated with you?" I was thunderstruck, and had not power to reply. "No," said Brégi, "it was I who first conceived the idea; but why do you think it *strange?*"—"Because I have told you a thousand times that I have an invincible aversion to marriage."—"But consider the beauty of Madame de L***, her virtues, her fortune!"—"I have made up my mind never to marry."—"You are so young, my friend; at your age such a resolution cannot be irrevocable."—"I shall never change it. I have devoted my life to my country, to friendship; I have placed all my happiness in a good conscience, and in the esteem of those I love....While fortune affords me opportunities of performing useful actions, or making generous sacrifices, my existence will not be burdensome to me. Is it not a thousand

times more gratifying to be content with yourself than to enjoy the favours of fortune together with a heart into which you dare not penetrate, and are afraid to examine?....My happiness is not subject to the caprices of chance; it is independent as my mind: my will determines and fixes it for ever; for no human event can prevent us from *living and thinking virtuously*."..At these words, uttered with the expression of the most profound sensibility, involuntary tears flowed from my eyes; and the admiration which extorted them was of a character so exalted and so pure that I felt no embarrassment on account of them....Brégi was equally affected, and Roquelaure, who was himself moved, paused, and looked at us both. After a moment's silence, he rose, came up to me, and with an agitation which alarmed me, "Farewell, madam," said he, "farewell! It is most gratifying to me to carry away the remembrance of your heart-felt favours, but I will not abuse your generous sensibility, and I

think I can give you no stronger proof of my gratitude than in depriving myself of the pleasure of ever seeing you again." Without waiting for my answer, he hastily withdrew, and was followed by Brégi.

For several days the image of Roquelaure haunted me incessantly. I had continually before my eyes that elegant and majestic figure, that interesting face, in which were expressed all the emotions of a tender and magnanimous heart. All his words engraved upon my memory seemed to have erased from it every other idea - those ingenious words whose real meaning was to me so impressive. I fancied that I still heard the inflexions of his voice. I succeeded at length, by keeping myself constantly employed, in banishing these cherished recollections; but they were not so dangerous for me as might be imagined. Roquelaure's magnanimity awakened in me a useful emulation; to raise my ideas to that elevation, to that sublimity of virtue, was

to approach nearer to him. I no longer represented him to myself under the character of an impassioned lover: I beheld in him only an enlightened judge, a generous friend, and a pattern of human perfection. The happiness and glory of resembling and equalling him rendered the greatest sacrifices easy to me, and the inexpressible satisfaction of admiring him with enthusiasm consoled me under all vexations. Oh! how easy it is to strengthen ourselves in virtue, when we find in what we love that happy conformity of ideas, sentiments, and principles! With what alacrity we can advance in this noble career, when a beloved object precedes and invites us to follow in it.

Roquelaure by his conduct acquired new claims to my gratitude. Brégi, with an excellent heart and a thousand good qualities, had the misfortune to be passionately attached to gaming: and though our fortune was large, yet this ruinous

propensity had, during the three years that we had been married, considerably deranged our affairs.

One day when Brégi was with Roquelaure in a house where a party of gamblers was assembled, he joined them; and in spite of the remonstrances of his friend, who never engaged in games of chance, he persisted, played all night, and lost fifty thousand francs, for the payment of which he gave his word. Roquelaure remained with him till the party broke up; when Brégi, overwhelmed with despair, returned home, and could not conceal from me his extreme embarrassment. He had promised to pay within twenty-four hours; he had no money, and we agreed to mortgage an estate, and to have recourse to money-brokers, in order to obtain that sum immediately.

Brégi was deeply sensible of this last indiscretion, which could not fail to produce the total derangement of our affairs. I did not reproach him, but

continued silent: he was overwhelmed with deep dejection, when a letter was brought him from Roquelaure. He read it hastily with extreme emotion, his eyes filled with tears; he rose and gave me the letter, saying: "Read it, and see if there exists a friend who can be compared with that? I am going to him to sign the irrevocable promise which he desires." At these words Brégi withdrew, and I read the letter, which was as follows:

"Your debt is paid, and I have inclosed you the receipt. The state of my finances is such that I have no occasion for that sum, and you would disoblige me exceedingly if you think of returning it in less than three years. Let me intreat you, my dear Brégi, to make one reflection: you have a most generous and tender heart, and a fortune superior to mine, and yet it would not be in your power to render a service of this kind to your best friend, or to make a prompt and useful sacrifice in these troublesome times to your king and

country! Think seriously of this, and you will cease to be a gamester. You have told me a thousand times that there is nothing in the world which you would not be capable of doing for my sake. Well then, my dear Brégi, I will put you to the test: give me your word of honour that you will from this moment and for ever abstain from games of chance, and my gratitude shall be as lively and sincere as the friendship which I have vowed to you for life."

This letter made me doubly happy, both in the tranquillity which it assured to me, and in the satisfaction of owing it to the noble and virtuous Roquelaure. Brégi actually entered into a solemn engagement never to play again, and he has kept his word with the most scrupulous fidelity.

Fresh troubles and fresh misfortunes obliged Henry III. to retire precipitately from Paris: he fled to Chartres, and the Duke of Guise, being left sole master of

Paris, ruled there with despotic sway.* A venerable old man, whose name will never die, Achille de Harlay, first president of the parliament, having to the very last continued true to his sovereign, enforced the sacred precepts of duty and virtue, amidst the shouts and menaces of the seditious; and with the same composure and energy as when the whole nation applauded his masculine eloquence with all the transports of deserved admiration, having positively refused to fly when he might easily have escaped, he returned to his house, when he found it impossible to gain a hearing, and was obliged to leave the hall, the doors of which were fastened by the factious. This great man calmly retired to his garden, under the persuasion that his enemies would follow and murder him there, conceiving that they durst not kill him in the streets for fear of the

* Historical.

people, by whom he was equally beloved and revered. All at once he heard the doors of his house open with a loud noise, and a great number of armed men enter: it was the Duke of Guise, who, with a numerous retinue, was come, according to his own expression, *to pay him a visit.* The president perfectly understood them; he was half way down an alley; but without turning his head or quickening his pace, he proceeded to the end of it before he turned back. He then slowly advanced, with his hands behind him, and a look of the utmost serenity and dignity. The Duke of Guise, who ardently desired to corrupt him (which the head of a party always thinks he can do), hastily went forward to meet him, and paid him the most flattering compliment. Harlay listened with unchanged countenance, and replied in these memorable words: "'Tis a great pity when the servant supplants the master: for the rest, my soul belongs to God, my heart to my sovereign, and my body is in the

power of wicked men; let them do with it what they please*." Having thus spoken, he continued his walk with the same composure as before. The duke was petrified; he was not destitute of greatness of soul; his admiration got the better of his resentment, and the life of the greatest magistrate of France was spared.†

The year following, Friar Ange de Joyeuse, who had once displayed such valour in the military profession, quitted his convent, and went at the head of his monks to implore Henry III. to resume the noble functions of king. This extraordinary deputation gave a momentary impulse to that unfortunate monarch; but he speedily reverted to his natural indolence.

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* Historical.

† Historical. A magistrate of an illustrious family (the first president Molé) afterwards displayed, during the regency of Anne of Austria, the same courage, the same virtues, and the same heroic fidelity to his sovereign.

Friar Ange, instigated by his opinions and his conscience, not by ambition, to return to a military life, eminently proved that religion and piety, instead of diminishing great courage, only tend on the contrary to exalt it. He received the staff of marshal of France from the victorious hands of Henry IV; and almost immediately afterwards buried his glory in eternal solitude; he returned to his convent and never left it more.

We were still at Paris, and I sometimes visited one of my female friends at her country-house in the vicinity of that city. The garden of this house communicated by means of a little gate with the park of the fashionable Countess of S***. I was shy of forming an acquaintance with this lady, whose character was somewhat equivocal; but Brégi, attracted as he said by the charms of the situation, paid her frequent visits. Roquelaure, who had become the guardian angel of Brégi, went thither also to take care of his

friend in a house which to him appeared in every point of view dangerous.

One night, about twelve o'clock, Brégi told me that he was going to spend an hour with the countess, who was giving a little entertainment, to which he was invited. He accordingly left me in considerable haste. Every body in our house was in bed, and as the night was excessively hot, I felt inclined, as soon as Brégi was gone, to take a breath of air, and went down stairs into the garden. As I passed the little gate, I observed that it was half open. It must have flown open again after he pulled it to, without his perceiving it: he had the key of it in his pocket. From a motive of curiosity, I determined to take advantage of his carelessness, passed through the gate, and entered the park of the Countess of S***. It was not large, so that I soon reached the end of it: there I saw an iron gate leading to the court, beyond which was the house. The gate was

shut, and I remarked with surprise that all was quiet and silent, and that no lights were to be seen in the house. Where then, thought I, are they making this entertainment to which Brégi is invited? Without bestowing any farther thought on this contradictory circumstance, I determined to return by the way I had come, and to keep along by the wall that I might not lose myself in the park, where I had never been before. I had to pass through a long alley, bordered on one side by the wall, and on the other by a hedge of horn-beam. All at once I heard some one speaking behind this hedge, and advancing as softly as possible on tip-toe, and listening at the same time, I recognized the voice of Brégi and Roquelaure. I stopped with an emotion which it is impossible to describe. They were seated on a bench, conversing with the greatest earnestness, and I overheard the following dialogue.

"Don't put yourself in a passion, my dear Brégi; we can't settle the matter

so well while we are walking: all I request is that you would give me a quarter of an hour's attention." "Pray put an end to your foolery: you have the key of the gate, I tell you." "Supposing I have, what then?" "I want to get into the house." "I know it, and I mean to do you a service in preventing you." "Upon my word, it is too much! notwithstanding all the gratitude I owe you, I will never submit to such tyranny, I protest." "Listen to me for two minutes without interrupting me, and then if you require it I will give you the key." "Well, then, make haste." "I this morning heard the Countess of S*** make an appointment to meet her to night at twelve; did she not tell you." "She has something particular to say. I promised to come, and I will keep my word." "Hitherto you have maintained the character of a man of honour, and to speak plainly, with the wife whom heaven has given you, there is no great merit in that. If you go to that woman,

and hear what she has to say, you will ruin your morals, your principles, and your peace of mind." "I can solemnly assure you that it is no improper assignation: she is in great trouble, and wishes to open her heart to me, and ask my advice." "Open her heart to you?... Ask the advice of a person ten years younger than herself! She wants to seduce you, that's her object. She hates your wife, who keeps her at a distance; she is envious of her youth, her beauty, her unspotted reputation (for vice is the natural enemy of virtue); she flatters herself that she shall destroy her happiness. And would you be so base as to second these black designs, and to sacrifice an incomparable wife to a woman of the loosest principles?" "No, Roquelaure; I love my wife alone, and I protest that I never said a single word to the Countess of S*** which exceeded the limits of mere politeness, and that she never talked to me of any thing but confidence and friendship. Nay, more,

I really think that she is deeply in love with you".....Here Roquelaure burst into a loud laugh and then rejoined: "It is true, she began to try the effect of her artifices upon me, but you saw in what manner I met her advances." "Yes, indeed, with a rudeness, which from a man of your breeding would never have been expected." "That is the way to treat women of her stamp when you perceive that they are forming schemes of seduction. For these six weeks she has given up all thoughts of me. I have again grown polite to her, and have continued my visits to this house where every thing disgusts me, solely to take care of you, and to watch over your happiness, which is a thousand times dearer to me than you can imagine." "Then you pretend to be my guardian, my tutor." "Just so, and that is the whole extent of my pretensions." "And yet you are but four years older than I am. But come, I tell you again that Madame de S*** has something particular to say

to me, and I give you my word, that if she is so indiscreet as to speak to me, ever so indirectly, of love, I shall not hesitate to do my duty." "At least you would answer her without *rudeness, like a well bred man*, would you not? I give you credit for your candour: you certainly mean all that you say; but I know you too well: your easy and pliable disposition would yield to every thing. You shall not have the key." "I must and will have it. Did you not tell me that if I persisted, after I had heard what you had to say, you would give it to me?" "Yes, but permit me to add a word or two. Is it possible that you are not aware of the indecency of such a visit, be the pretext what it will? Consider how unseasonable the hour, your own youth, the character of that woman! What, after being so weak as to be guilty of such a violation of decorum, are you not afraid for yourself, and can you rationally flatter yourself with the hope of resisting the blandishments of a coquette so tho-

roughly versed in her art, during a long private interview in the middle of the night. My dear Brégi, I have no other authority over you than what the most sincere friendship can confer—renounce that friendship, and you will no longer be subject to it. There is the key, take it if you please; but if you do, you will dissolve all connexion between us, and I shall bid you adieu for ever!" "What, threats too?" "Oh, no, 'tis but a truth that I declare to you; this step would pierce my heart: never would I see you more, since you would prefer a base and artful woman, whom you cannot love, to sacred duties and a friend devotedly attached to you." "Your friendship is but an insupportable tyranny; you will at last require me one of these days to turn hermit or capuchin." "Here, then, take the key." "I ought by right, but you lead me like a child."—

Here, well assured that Brégi, notwithstanding his vexation, would obey the dictates of reason, I began to think

how I should get out of the park again unperceived. I stole away as softly and expeditiously as possible, and soon reached my apartment. I could not help reflecting on all that I had just heard, and what a debt of gratitude I owed to Roquelaure. In order to be thoroughly sensible of it, I represented to myself what would have become of Brégi, with his easy disposition, his warm passions, and his indiscretion, without so vigilant a guardian! I could not forget that Brégi owed to him not only the preservation of his principles, his morals, his character, and his fortune, which, but for Roquelaure, the baneful passion of gaming would have totally dissipated, but that he likewise owed him his life, which Roquelaure had saved in battle at the hazard of his own!....What pleasure I felt in recalling to mind all these immense obligations! with what delight I considered that Roquelaure, influenced by a sentiment of which none but himself was capable, had thus devoted his

whole existence to his rival, merely to promote my welfare! In spite of all that separated us, he had so far made himself the arbiter of my destiny as to be the founder and preserver of my happiness. His love, a profound secret to all the world besides, was incessantly displaying itself to my view in actions of unparalleled generosity: I met with it in all the important events of my life, nay, even in the virtues of my husband, and in the harmony of our union.

I had not time that night to pursue these gratifying reflections. Brégi came home in about a quarter of an hour, somewhat ruffled; but by the next morning he had recovered his usual cheerfulness: he could talk of nothing but Roquelauré, his virtue, his discretion, and the good fortune of possessing such a friend. This adventure broke off all intercourse between Brégi and the Countess, and I abstained from visiting my friend any more, that I might keep him away from so dangerous a neighbourhood: but it was not long before all private interests

were absorbed, by the important political events.

After the tragic end of the unfortunate Henry III. Roquelaure and Brégi warmly espoused the cause of his successor, the magnanimous monarch to whom Crillon so truly said: "*Sire, you will always be the king of the brave.*" *

At the period of the siege of Paris, the express command of Brégi, and the state of our affairs, obliged me to retire to my estate in Auvergne. I was then twenty-two, and had been married six years.

Scarcely had I reached my country seat, when I received tidings that completely robbed me of all hopes of happiness, and all consolation on this side of the grave!....In one of the late battles Brégi had been killed, and Roquelaure mortally wounded. It was thought that I should not survive this dreadful shock. The same night, a burning fever and a violent delirium, suspended, for at least a

* Historical.

fortnight, the consciousness of my misfortunes. On recovering my reason, the first thing I did was to send a messenger to Paris; and I waited his return in a state of inexpressible wretchedness and anxiety. He came back in about three weeks. Heaven still reserved for me an emotion of joy. A note was brought me from Roquelaure; I opened it, and read these words in his hand-writing:

"I am deeply sensible of your misfortune, and the loss of my friend....He should have lived, for he was happy.... My wound is mortal. I am ordered to try the waters; I prefer those of Mont d'Or,* where I intend to die."

I bathed this note with my tears. Roquelaure, however, was still living: I considered his youth, and a gleam of hope broke through the gloom of my heart. With what painful solicitude and impatience I waited for his coming! Four tedious

* Mont d'Or is in Auvergne.

months elapsed before his arrival. myself to prepare a lodging for him Mont d'Or, and under the pretence of taking the waters, I fixed myself there likewise. At length I saw him arrive: but how pale! how altered! he was evidently in a dying state. His wound was in the breast, and left no room for hope. He could nevertheless walk, and that without assistance: he was not in much pain, and his countenance still retained its highly interesting and amiable expression; but he appeared so weak, his voice was so feeble, his step so faltering, that he seemed to have scarcely a few moments to live. Having been prepared for a month past to meet me at the waters, he arrived about noon, having stopped the preceding night ten miles from Mont d'Or. He came immediately to my lodgings. Extremely apprehensive for his sake of the consequences of this first interview, I had sufficient self-command to repress within my bosom all those feelings which his appearance ex-

cited. So powerful was his emotion at the sight of me, that he was obliged to lay hold of the back of a chair, being unable to support himself any longer. I reached him an arm-chair, and sat down beside him, without power to speak, or to restrain my tears. I reached him my hand, which he clasped between his, saying, in broken accents: "Your happiness had become mine.....you have lost it; why then should I regret life?" "O, Roquelaure!" I exclaimed, interrupting him, "leave me not, but live to dry my tears: live.....!" I stopped short; he looked stedfastly at me; his eyes sparkled; a slight flush tinged his cheeks; but immediately covering his face with both hands: "What!" said he, "deceive myself again on the brink of the grave!".....:"What do you say?" cried I, hurried away by an irresistible emotion, "deceive yourself!—What! if you are assured that I love you, that I never loved with passion any other than you! Ah, Roquelaure! at length you are ac-

quainted with the real sentiments of my soul."......At these words, Roquelaure trembling pressed my hand to his heart: "O words," said he, "that ought to renew the current of life, words that ought to disperse the shades of death; and all the gloomy recollections of past wretchedness, ye rekindle the spark of life that was ready to expire within me!...I was beloved !....I did venture, at times, to suspect as much....but I repelled the fond idea as the empty phantom of a bewildered imagination.....You love me !....and I have sighed in despair, and fancied myself generous!...No, I shall not die; I feel new life circulate in my veins....You love me! No, I cannot die!" While thus speaking his voice acquired surprising strength and firmness; his cheeks glowed, and his eyes sparkled with the highest animation. I shared his illusion: I imagined that love had wrought a miracle, and that this unexpected joy would produce in him a revolution which might save his life...I in-

dulged myself in the happiness of disclosing my whole soul to him, and thus making myself amends for an absolute silence of six years. Nevertheless, this joy, which was heightened to intoxication, did not prevent me from feeling the wound that rankled in my heart: an inward, a terrific voice, persevering as that of remorse, cried without ceasing: '*He cannot recover.*' In vain I affected security, in vain I talked of happiness; nothing could silence this gloomy foreboding.

We passed the whole day together: he dined with me, and ate a little, assuring me that he felt quite well: his face still retained its glow, and I had never seen his eyes so brilliant. As the day declined a sort of terror came over me, and kept encreasing every moment, especially at the approach of night. At eight o'clock he rose to leave me: he reeled, turned pale, and putting out his hand as if to feel for me, he said: "Where are you?"....I trembled, and

supported him in my arms: he held his hand to his eyes, and added: "it is nothing; only a slight dizziness; but it is over again."....His servant came to fetch him, and he leaned upon his arm. "Adieu," said he to me, in a low tone; "this has been a day which makes amends for a long series of sorrows. Adieu."—"Are you not unwell?" I asked him with extreme agitation. "No," said he, "I am quite well: don't make yourself uneasy."—"I am not uneasy; but I am afraid that the vehemence of your feelings has overpowered you."—"Promise me that you will go to bed."—"To be sure: why should I sit up? Are you unwell?"—"No, I am happy, very happy." "Adieu; sleep in peace....adieu....adieu." So saying he gently pressed my hand, and departed, leaving me in profound dejection. Those last words, "*Adieu, adieu,*" continued to ring in my ears, and made me shudder. Trembling, and chilled with fear, I sunk into an arm-chair, where I determined to pass

the night....I was but too well persuaded of the afflicting truth.....we had each of us deceived ourselves. After the first paroxysm of enthusiasm, which had for a few moments imparted a glimmer of hope, he had soon relinquished these pleasing illusions, and been anxious only to conceal his sufferings, and the attack of a violent fever. In about an hour, he sent his valet to tell me that he had gone to bed, that he was perfectly easy, and entreated me to retire to rest. The concern expressed in the countenance of the messenger was not calculated to relieve my apprehensions.....I remained motionless, without asking him any question, or making any reply: he left me in haste, and with horror I again found myself alone....There was a dreadful confusion in my ideas; for all those which I chased from my mind during the day returned upon me in crowds, and I would not dwell upon any of them. We lodged in different houses, but which were situated very near to

one another. All at once I considered that he had no person about him to render any assistance which he might require but his valet: I immediately rose, called my maid, and taking her with me, hastened to the next house. It was ten o'clock. We entered Roquelaure's apartment without noise, and my spirits were suddenly revived when I found that all was quiet there, and above all, for finding neither nurse nor physician. A servant, who had not yet gone to bed, told me that the valet had lain down beside his master, and that both were fast asleep. The cheerful looks of the man proved a more grateful cordial than the most consolatory assurances. I arranged with him that I would send one of my people to sit up during the night, in case he should be wanted for any errand, as he was perfectly acquainted with the village and neighbourhood of the mountain. Before I returned home, I went softly and listened at the door of his chamber, while my heart throbbed with

such violence as to suspend my breath.... In about a quarter of an hour I heard him cough: the tears trickled from my eyes, and on my knees I returned thanks to the Almighty: I was sure, at least, that he was yet living, though, amid the horror of my reveries, for two hours past I had so often beheld him lifeless!....It seemed as if heaven had anew restored him to me....He lived, and I thought no longer of the danger of his situation..... Still continuing to listen, I heard a slight noise of cups and glasses, from which I knew that he was drinking; he must, consequently, be awake; and as he neither complained nor called any body, I concluded that he must really be well. In this idea I was confirmed by the total silence which followed: I had no doubt that he had fallen asleep again, and returned home, if not without anxiety, at least buoyed up by hope.

It was now the month of July. As I could not resolve to retire to bed, I went to walk upon a terrace which commands

a view of part of Mont d'Or. The atmosphere was clear and serene, and the contemplation of the spectacle of a cloudless night suddenly changing the disposition of my mind, threw me into the deepest melancholy. It requires a soul at once pious and tranquil to derive unalloyed enjoyment from the beauties of nature: their language is silent and vague, but infinitely more eloquent than the vain arguments of our understanding: they proclaim the existence of a Creator, a Supreme Ruler, and a Judge; they convince us of the littleness of all human things, which naturally appear to us to be so important. Were the ambitious man compelled to go abroad every night, to contemplate a firmament studded with stars, and the rising sun every morning, he would be cured of his ambition.

I was absorbed in a gloomy reverie, when the village clock, striking twelve, awoke me out of it. At the same moment I heard a dog howling most lament-

ably: a superstitious feeling made my heart sink within me. I rose, walked across my room into a closet which looked upon a green, at the farther end of which, opposite to my window, stood the rectory. I opened the window, and had scarcely seated myself in the balcony, when I perceived at a distance a man with a lantern, hastening towards the rector's house. Thrilled with a fearful presentiment, I remained motionless, with my eyes fixed on this man. When he had reached the house, he knocked repeatedly, and some person within answered him, but without opening the door. But, gracious God! what was my anguish when I recognized the voice of the servant whom I had left at Roquelaure's lodgings, and heard him say: "It is for the Count de Roquelaure, who is dying, and wishes to receive the sacrament." . . . I heard no more . . . my senses forsook me.

Whilst my sufferings were at least suspended, the unfortunate Roquelaure's

last moments drew nigh. After he had received the sacrament and given his last orders, he expired at two in the morning. His valet, the faithful executor of his dying injunctions, immediately came to deliver my sister's crucifix and my prayer book. My servants came in to look for me, and found me senseless in the balcony of my closet; they conveyed me to bed. . . . I had lived in such perfect harmony with the husband whom heaven had given me, that the secret of my heart was utterly unknown. My women, who had not the slightest suspicion of the matter, introduced Roquelaure's valet as soon as I had come to myself. I shrieked on perceiving the crucifix and the book in his hands. "Then he is no more!" I exclaimed. "No, madam," answered the valet, with tears. "I have lost the most virtuous and the best of masters; he expired pressing this crucifix to his heart, and while, by his command, I was reading aloud a prayer out of this book." Those two things he

enjoined me to deliver to you after his death, with this letter." So saying, he laid them down upon a table beside my bed. I sent every body out of the room; then bathed in tears, I fell on my knees before this valued crucifix, and implored the Almighty to grant me the strength and resignation necessary to support such a shock..... I then opened the letter which was fastened to the crucifix, and which was as follows:—

"This venerated sign of our faith will then have been the last consolation of two hearts possessed with an unfortunate passion!... Keep it as long as you live!... O, angelic object of an attachment impassioned, but pure as my thoughts, which must have appeared so to you in all my actions: with what fascinations does your image in these my last moments present itself to my recollection! Religion commands me not to repel it. That mysterious and constant affection which was known to you alone,

and which was never manifested but in the sacrifice of itself, reminds me of nought but virtuous conflicts and acts of generous self-denial! It is true you love me, you are free, and death snatches from me a legitimate felicity! But learn to know all the exaltation of my sentiments! Methinks earthly happiness would profane such love; it sprung up and was nurtured in silence and in tears; religion, in purifying, imparted to it all the elevation, all the sublime disinterestedness of the most heroic friendship.... Ah! what could henceforth do, that should surpass or even equal what I have performed for you? When fate has removed that sacred veil of mystery and love which covered our lives; when it shall be no longer possible for me to give you fresh proofs of a boundless devotion to your welfare, I have lived long enough, my destiny is accomplished!....You have enlarged my soul and opened my eyes.... No; a frail and vulgar happiness is not adapted to such noble sentiments; an

immortal felicity ought to crown this pure and celestial ardour. You have opened for me the gates of heaven; thither I am going, to seek the due reward of faith and persevering virtue....there Supreme Justice will assign to me the pleasing task of blessing you to all eternity!.....Adieu: live to honour those invisible ties which have united and sanctified us: live to preserve for me upon earth the only memorial of glory that I desire to leave behind me."

I shall not attempt to describe my anguish, raised as it was to the highest pitch by this letter, which completely unfolded to me the sublime soul of the unfortunate Roquelaure. My only consolation was, to give vent to a sentiment so long repressed. I employed the most eminent artists in France to erect a magnificent monument to his memory. This mournful business engaged me for a whole year. At the end of that time, as the summer was just beginning, and

I found myself more oppressed than ever with a regret and grief which I could not overcome, and which had already impaired my health, I determined to make a tour in Switzerland. I set out, taking with me the much-valued crucifix, the sacred depository of the last sentiments of two unfortunate hearts....that cross, upon which I shall also expire my last breath......I stopped at Geneva, and there lived in profound seclusion, seeing nobody but a celebrated physician whom I consulted without hope: for what could all the resources of his art avail against the malady under which I was sinking. This physician deeply interested me in the account which he gave of the virtuous Bishop of Geneva;* that saint, endued with such persuasive eloquence, and who, in the space of twelve years, had brought back into the bosom of the church more than seventy thousand souls! † He was just at this

* St. Francis de Sales. † Historical.

time visiting his diocese, performing his journey on foot, like the apostles, and accompanied by one single ecclesiastic, a relative of his. Most of the parishes of this diocese were situated in dreary deserts: he was obliged to climb almost inaccessible rocks, at the risk of being precipitated, if either feet or hands had slipped, into the most tremendous abysses: he was obliged to put up with a bed of straw, and often to be content with coarse bread and wild roots for his only fare. But nothing could cool the ardent charity of this zealous pastor, who, according to his own expression, was determined that all the sheep belonging to his flock should hear his voice. He was daily expected at Geneva, and all classes were anxiously wishing for his return. As the physician recommended me to try the effect of a change of air, I removed to a small house, situated in a wild country, about ten miles from Geneva.

One morning, when I was walking in

the fields as usual, I found myself so much depressed in body and mind, that I was unable to go on; I threw myself down on the trunk of a tree, and over-powered by the painful sensations to which I was a prey, I burst into tears.... and raising my eyes towards heaven, I exclaimed:

" O thou, whom I loved and admired beyond measure, thou hast carried with thee to the tomb every sentiment of my heart! I can find nothing in the past but thy recollection alone! in the future I can only see a long and dismal night!.... What is there now for me on this earth, where thou art no longer present! A stranger to every thing which surrounds me, I shall look with equal indifference and disdain on the vain pleasures of dissipation, the frivolous enjoyments of self-love, and the projects of ambition!.... How shall I contemplate, without envy, the picture of felicity, the happy union of two feeling hearts!....In what conversation can I feel an interest! Who can

speak in congenial language to me, of generosity, of delicacy, of grandeur of soul, and especially of love!"....I shall be doomed to hear vulgar actions and ordinary friendships spoken of in terms of enthusiastic praise!....No, no: let me rather bury my life, as well as my grief, in an eternal and profound solitude!".... Here my words were interrupted by my sighs; I heard a noise, and on casting my eyes towards the quarter from which it proceeded, all at once, at the distance of two hundred paces, I perceived a figure rise from the summit of a rock, of so venerable and majestic an appearance, that I instantly recognized, from the description which I had heard, the respectable Bishop of Genova, whom in reality it was. He was clothed with a robe torn into several pieces, and tucked up above his knees: he carried on his shoulders a havresack, and a golden cross was suspended from his neck. He was followed by a single priest, much younger than himself, but who was neither more

agile, nor more robust....Carried away by an irresistible movement, I rose, and ran to precipitate myself at the feet of the holy bishop, exclaiming: " O, my father! bless me, and cure me."....He stopped me, and looking at me with affection, and put several questions to me. I informed him who I was, and told him that I had lost every object of my affection; that I was alone in the universe, and that I had not sufficient strength to support this dreadful state of isolation....At these words the bishop raised his head, and pointing to heaven: " Ah, my child," said he, " the invisible and Supreme Comforter watches over you every instant!....It is in solitude and suffering that he in an especial manner holds communication with his children, with a more peculiar kindness....But I can conceive your sufferings; I have mine also.....Ten weeks ago I lost the best of mothers!—Return to Geneva; I shall see you there, and we will weep together!" As he was uttering these

words we saw several peasants approaching, who seemed seeking for him: they were deputies from a neighbouring valley, who came to inform him that since his diocesan visit rocks had fallen from the mountains, and destroyed several villages, and a great number of inhabitants; that reduced by this calamity to the greatest wretchedness, and unable to pay the taxes, they could not, however, obtain an exemption from them; and they beseeched him to send proper persons to the spot to verify the matter, that he might write in their favour.* The bishop offered to set off instantly, to convey to them all the assistance which was in his power. They informed him, that since his visit, by the destruction of bridges, the tumbling of rocks, and by extensive inundations, the roads had been rendered impassable. "But," said the bishop, "do not you yourselves come from thence?"—"Yes, my lord,"

* Historical.

replied one of the deputies; "but we are poor people, accustomed from our infancy to such fatigues."—"And I, my children," said the bishop, "I am your father, and obliged to provide myself for all your wants." * With these words, which brought tears of joy and gratitude into the eyes of the deputies, this worthy pastor turning towards me, informed me that this incident would somewhat retard his return to Geneva, but that he would be there without fail in eight days. Then, without losing a moment, he requested them to guide him, and immediately left me.

This interview procured me the first consolation I had tasted since my last misfortune....My heart felt a relief in the feeling of admiration: since the death of Roquelaure, I imagined this elevating sentiment was for ever lost to me.

I remained five or six days longer in my retreat, and then returned to Ge-

* Historical.

neva: the bishop arrived there two days after me, and was received as an adored father. He proceeded through the city on foot, in his apostolical robes: every one rushed out to see him: they surrounded him, and pressed around him: they cut off pieces of his tattered garments, for the sake of preserving them as precious monuments of evangelical charity: they received his benedictions with tears, and in bestowing on him all the affecting names expressive of respect, filial love and gratitude: in this manner he was conducted to the episcopal palace.*—He visited me according to his promise: I related to him my history; and I had the satisfaction of beholding this holy man weep along with me for the incomparable friend whom I had lost; and this, of all the homages which had been rendered to his memory, was undoubtedly the most glorious. The bishop next spoke to me of his own suf-

* He was actually beloved with this enthusiasm.

ferings: "Conceive," said he, "the bitterness with which my soul was filled, when a mother, the most revered and cherished, would in her last moments receive assistance from me alone.* I was obliged to assume the firmness of a father of the church towards her, whom it had always been such a pleasure for me to obey. I had to exhort her in the hour of death to whom I owed my own life. I spoke to her of courage when I felt my own give way. That I might not weaken her, I suppressed with difficulty and pain the tears to which she was entitled; and oppressed with grief, I was forced from time to time to escape into an adjoining chamber to give full vent to my tears in the bosom of God.† Yes, my child, these sufferings, accompanied by resignation, are lawful tributes, and we must pay them; but to sink under our sorrows is a guilty weakness, from which we ought to be

* Historical. † Historical.

preserved by confidence in prayer and by Christian charity. How many means religion offers us of surmounting them! For example," continued he, "I will propose to you to imitate Saint Mary, the *Consoler*,* who obtained this endearing surname, because, while yet young, rich, and beautiful, she consecrated her life entirely to the assistance of the poor, and the consolation of the afflicted. I have always thought that this amiable saint had herself experienced some great affliction, and that to withdraw her thoughts from it, she had recourse to this manner of dedicating herself to the unfortunate. Whenever she discovered any one labouring under violent anguish, she found means of introducing herself: she first wept with the afflicted, and having gained their friendship, she never quitted them: she afterwards, by ingenious exhortations, recalled them gently

* Who lived in the sixth century.

to reason, and took her leave only when she saw them completely consoled.*..... When we are thus occupied with others (and religion alone can enable us), we at last learn to forget ourselves, and all the wounds of the heart, which are empoisoned merely by the fatal care we take to preserve them, soon close and heal."

These conversations of the pious bishop raised my dejected soul: notwithstanding his extreme indulgence, and his angelic mildness, he inspired such respect and veneration, that one would have blushed to appear weak in his eyes.....Desirous of drawing me from my absolute retreat, he immediately proposed to take me into his family: "You will find there," said he, "neither gloom nor austerity: there are people," he added, "who imagine they are bestowing praise on the house of a person in active life, by saying it is a true cloister; that they live there as in

* All these details are to be found in the life of this saint.

a convent....These exercises are good and holy; but we must consider circumstances, places, times, persons, and conditions: charity out of place is not charity; it is a tree transplanted into an improper soil." *

"During the two years which I passed in Geneva I found in the respectable family of the holy bishop every consolation which my situation required: I derived there the necessary strength for enabling me to support, without sinking under it, the regret of an irreparable loss, and recollections which nothing can ever efface from my heart. (6).

Here ended the history of the Countess de Brégi.

This heroic love, and the elevated character of the Count de Roquelaure, made a lively impression on Mademoiselle de La Fayette, and completely confirmed her in the resolution of never be-

* His own words. See his Letters.

stowing her heart and her hand on a man of ordinary talents.

As soon as the delay which Mademoiselle de La Fayette had demanded before returning to court was expired, she went and resumed her service: to her great joy she found on her return a friend of her infancy and of her early youth: this was the Marchioness de Beaumont, who had been educated along with her in the female convent, Sainte-Marie, in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, till the age of thirteen, when Mademoiselle de La Fayette having quitted the convent to go to her aunt's, they separated without ever seeing one another afterwards. But those first ties, of which the remembrance is always so delightful, are easily renewed: these two persons were transported at meeting again: they had the same principles, the same sentiments, with different characters, especially to appearance. The Marchioness de Beaumont was twenty-five: she became a widow at seventeen, after two years marriage, and

was without fortune, her only subsistence being her situation about the queen's person: she had been six years at court. With an engaging and agreeable figure, she possessed a mind which was naturally observing, but the penetration of which was concealed by her gaiety: she was allowed to possess the talent of ridiculing, but not that of judging characters, and discerning the motives of intentions: her frankness was taken for rashness; but though she was incapable of committing a crime, she was equally incapable of committing an act of imprudence: she pleased universally, because nothing succeeds better at court than what is truly natural (as nature generally appears there under some constraint), and the light and heedless air, which can alone calm an infinity of alarms and suspicions. In short, she possessed that sort of very useful consideration which a certain turn of mind, epigrammatical without bitterness, and lively without extravagance, always gives.

The dread of a witty and biting repartee is in the world the most infallible restraint upon impertinence and malice.

In the evening Mademoiselle de La Fayette repaired to the limited circle of the queen: the conversation was there carried on with equal entertainment and freedom. Mademoiselle de La Fayette obtained every suffrage; she pleased the queen in a particular manner: the men were all sincere in their admiration; and all the women shewed that species of kindness towards her, which is naturally inspired by self-love itself for those individuals whose career commences with success. Besides, when nothing has yet been prepared of the nature of opposition, the resolution is taken of yielding with a good grace. It is known that with a little time it will be always easy to retract all the praise inconsiderately bestowed in the first moments. On leaving the queen, the two friends went and shut themselves in together, for the purpose of passing the night in each other's

company without interruption. The Marchioness de Beaumont began by drawing several portraits, somewhat satirically, but with great fidelity. "The Duchess of Chevreuse," said she, "is the heroine of intriguers; for she does not love intrigue from cupidity, nor even from ambition, but from a pure and disinterested love for agitation, bustle, and the events which she gives rise to—in short, for intrigue itself. What pleases her the most is not the success of an undertaking, but the pleasure of engaging in a mysterious affair, and conducting it with ability; the glory of inventing all the springs of a very complicated machine, and communicating to them a rapid and continual motion. Hence she was more brilliant, and decidedly happier in disgrace and exile, than she is here, because she was then intriguing for her return; but now that she is in her country, and thoroughly restored to favour, she languishes and droops: the vigilance of Cardinal de Richelieu renders all her intrigues fruit-

less; conspiracies are exhausted, and there is now nothing in this way to do, either on a grand scale or in a minor department; and all intriguers, except those of the cardinal's party, are thrown into consternation, disconcerted, and discouraged, and plunged in an overwhelming apathy....Nothing is to be dreaded here but *espionnage*."...."What!" said Mademoiselle de La Fayette, "in the society of the queen?"—"That is precisely the place where it is most active." "But how does the queen suffer spies in her private circle?"—"They belong to the court: they are known, and that is something. Were they to be expelled the cardinal would gain over others, of whom we should long remain the dupes. It is for our own interest to preserve the present ones."—"But who are then those unworthy creatures?"—"In the first place Chavigny, who has always been sold to the ministry."—"I recollect having heard this."—"We frequently amuse ourselves in deceiving him: when we

wish certain things to be communicated to the king or the cardinal which we are afraid of telling them, we appear to utter them unawares before him: I am almost always charged with this sort of part, which I act to admiration; for there is an infinite pleasure in duping an informer; but it frequently happens also, that things which are really imprudent escape from us in his presence during the heat of conversation, and the cardinal is sure to be informed of them next day." "And the other spies?"—"The Viscount de ***."...."The Viscount de ***!.... His manners are so noble!"....—"Hence espionnage is but a trade for Chavigny, but it is an art for the Viscount de ***. Chavigny relates clumsily to the cardinal whatever he hears; but the Viscount de *** falls upon quite a different plan: he never reports a positive phrase; every thing is vague in his informations: this is *the dignity* of the thing.....But he gives pretty clearly to understand that such a person is not an admirer of the

cardinal, or censures him; that another is his enemy: all this is told with delicacy, and not under the guise of odious reports: they are traits which *accidentally* escape from him through his attachment for the cardinal....they are admirably understood and profited by, and serve to produce hatred and revenge....and the Viscount de *** receives honours, places, and pensions."—"What a place this is!" "It requires a long residence and study to know it thoroughly: knowledge of the world is not sufficient here....Every thing vicious and ridiculous is softened, refined, and veiled at court: the natural in tone and manners is in general more imperfect in it than in the circles of Paris: but in return, affectation is less marked, falsehood more suspicious of itself, and fearful of more experienced and more interested observers: hypocrisy and flattery never appear here under a vulgar form; imbecility and folly appear only by stealth, and with such delicate features that it requires very nice eyes to

discover them. For example, this Viscount de ***, of whom we were speaking just now, when out of his disguise at Paris, is an ostentatious fool: his object there is to induce people to believe that he possesses credit, and is beloved by the cardinal; but here the object is to persuade the world that he has no pretensions, and that he is only guided by honourable views, by sentiments of glory and attachment: hence the Viscount de ***, under another tone, another appearance, and another language, is no longer distinguishable."—"It must be owned that all this shows a good taste in the dissimulation."—"And this good taste gives rise at court to actions and proceedings externally praise-worthy, which we seldom witness elsewhere.... Propriety is so nobly managed, that it assumes the appearance of virtue.— No one here endeavours to supplant a friend; for treachery of this nature would be dishonourable, and dishonour is dreaded as an invincible obstacle to fortune....

The chagrin for the disgrace of a minister for whom a great attachment has been professed, is not only not atempted to be concealed, but even studiously published: he is not abandoned in the first moments of his misfortune; but then the attentions to be shewn him have in this case their limited time, after which it is allowable to neglect and forget him, like the mournings which we wear without affliction, and at the end of which, throwing aside the appearance of affliction, we cease any longer to constrain ourselves. But these forms are becoming: they prevent low and shocking actions; they give an estimable appearance to manners, and they preserve alive ideas of a noble and just nature. It is quite natural that in the place where the greatest desire and the greatest interest to succeed should be united, the exterior should also be the most seductive, and all the means of pleasing and interesting better calculated than elsewhere.—Yes, if every thing which we see and hear in this place of

an amiable and praise-worthy nature were produced by sincere sentiments, this would be the golden age, and the age of civilization."

This conversation was prolonged through the greatest part of the night: the break of day at last forced the two friends to separate.

An accident happened next day which diffused a just indignation through the little court of the queen. We have already mentioned that the queen had built and founded the female monastery of Val-de-Grace: she frequently shut herself up there without any followers, and passed several days in it: these pious retreats were rendered suspected to the king, whom they persuaded that the queen merely withdrew to this convent for the purpose of writing in full freedom to her brother, the King of Spain.* It was supposed that all the letters of that prince were there deposited.

* Historical.—There was then a war with Spain.

and the king gave orders to the Archbishop of Paris and the Chancellor Seguier, to visit the convent, and especially the queen's apartment. On entering the house, the Archbishop prohibited the nuns, under the pain of excommunication, from speaking to one another: all the keys were demanded, they searched every cell and the apartment of the queen with the most minute care: a box, of which the queen had the key, was forced open, and nothing was found in it but penitential robes, girdles armed with iron points, disciplines, sackcloths, and prayer-books.* This produced the greatest confusion among the queen's informers. The singular disclosure only served to publish the piety of that princess, a piety the more touching, as she had hitherto carefully concealed its austerity. This triumph of the queen caused the greatest embarrassment to

* Historical.—*Mémoires de Madame de Motteville.*

the king, and it produced on him the usual effect of rendering him less accessible and more savage than usual. The adventure, in exciting the indignation of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, increased her aversion for the king, whom she had not yet discovered, though she had been several days at court. As she was expressing one day to Madame de Beaumont her sentiments on this subject, "Well," said the marchioness, "when you shall have seen him, you will not speak in this manner."—"I shall always think as I now do."—"First, he is very handsome."—"So it is said; but what does that signify with such a character?" "An interesting paleness, beautiful brown hair, naturally curled, regular features, a melancholy air, an elegant and noble shape, in short, the figure of a hero of a romance *." "This hero will never be mine; a bad son, a bad husband, an indolent king."—"He has

* See *Memoires de Madame de Motteville.*

great abilities (*beaucoup d'Esprit*)*."—"He is the more to be condemned."—"Those who are near him say he is feeling." "He has abandoned all his friends." "It was proved to him that they betrayed him." "It would seem that the friendship of a sovereign imprints on the person who is honoured with it an august and sacred character, which ought, in every supposition, to preserve him from an ignominious death: hence Henry the Great has been reproached for allowing him whom he loved so much and whose life he had saved in battle to perish on the scaffold. Yet no subject was ever more guilty than the Marechal de Biron: the king told him that he knew all, that he possessed proofs of his crime (which was the truth), that he merely wished for a sincere avowal, and that he would then pardon every thing: Biron persisted in denying, and the king gave him up to justice; yet all Europe nevertheless were

* All the memoirs agree in this.

of opinion that this great king, from respect for an old friendship so intimate and so tender, ought after the sentence to have pardoned him and saved him from the scaffold. How then can we excuse the abandonment and death of Chalais *?" "Chalais was rather the favourite of *monsieur* than of the king." "In short, you love the king?" "He is handsome, witty, and brave; would you have a woman not to take an interest in him. Besides, he has great virtues, his morals are perfectly pure, and he possesses a great fund of justice." "A weak and indolent king cannot be just.—A sincere piety—very ill understood: I own that I have no great faith in that piety which does not produce the virtues which belong to the situation of the individual." "He has been in love, and his love was

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* And still less that of the *grand ecuyer Cinq Mars;* but the punishment of the latter did not take place till long afterwards, and a year before the death of the king.

of the most pure description, or rather, it was a tender and perfect friendship." "For Mademoiselle de Hautefort? But if he had loved her, she would have reformed his character; she would have elevated his soul." "She did not take the trouble." "Why then did she receive his confidence?" "To make her court to the queen, to boast of it, to laugh at him." "That is shocking: poor prince! He is indeed unfortunate." "Should he happen to entertain for you the same sentiment which he had for Mademoiselle de Hautefort?" "What an idea! What folly!" "Why? you are so beautiful, and have so sage an appearance!....I know that yesterday evening on his retiring to bed he spoke a great deal of you." "Well, what said he?"—"Ask the Commander de Jars..... The king, notwithstanding his habitual indolence, asked a thousand questions concerning you: the commander extolled your wit, the Count de Soissons praised your beauty, the Count de la Meilleraye spoke in high terms of your

gentleness, your modesty, your behaviour, and the king drew the conclusion that you were a person equally charming and faultless. You may rest assured that he will remark you; in the mean time you have already made a brilliant conquest." "How?" "That of the Count de Soissons, who is already desperately in love with you." "I do not believe it; but such a love would be extremely offensive to me: an alliance with a princess can alone become a man of his birth and rank: his ambition is well known, and his morals are neither pure nor decent." "This is very true; but he possesses a lively head, grandeur of soul, and he is very susceptible of the elevated and exalted....with all this he may be carried a great way by love; and where, pray, would be the folly of feeling an enthusiasm for a female of an illustrious birth, equally beautiful, witty, and virtuous? Your heart is free: if I were in your situation, I would subjugate and enchain him, and I would become Countess de Soissons." "But, my dear friend,

you are become quite extravagant this evening." "Not at all: I am speaking very reasonably. When I reflect on all your perfections: when I see the extraordinary sensation which you produce here, I feel for you an ambition beyond bounds." "And have you none yourself?" "Yes, I might perhaps possess some, but then it should be of a common sort. What I am proposing to you is certainly of a sufficiently noble nature." "I do not think so: to seduce a light-headed man, whose conduct cannot be held in much estimation, to lead him to form an ill-suited connexion, to take advantage of his passion without sharing it, is a triumph which an artful coquette might perhaps obtain, but which does not tempt me.—My heart requires an elevated sentiment, and my ambition the most exalted aim." "You are hard to please; but if the Count de Soissons should be fortunate enough to please you, you would find him amiable; were he to gain this noble and proud heart?"

"Then I should only have his glory in view; my ambition would be limited to him, and I should not marry him." At these words the marchioness was warmly affected, and seizing one of the hands of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, she pressed it in her own.—"I can conceive this last sentiment," she said, with a sigh, "and when you shall learn my story, you will see that I also am capable of sacrificing myself for the man I love." Mademoiselle de la Fayette was eager to learn this story, but it was too late to begin the recital. "Besides," added Madame de Beaumont, "our quarter's service with the queen will be finished in fifteen days, when we shall have a whole week's liberty, and as we can then dispose of our leisure at our pleasure, I shall satisfy your curiosity."

Two days after this conversation Mademoiselle de la Fayette, with the queen's permission, went to Paris under the guidance of Mademoiselle de Guise, to join the Charitable Ladies, and accompany

them in one of their visits to the *Hotel-Dieu.* This pious association, composed of the most distinguished ladies of the court and city, and under the direction of Saint-Vincent, went to that hospital with religious consolations and refreshments for the patients, and to form by their example the young grey-sisters *(Sœurs grises)*, newly instituted for the purpose of managing and tending the patients. These ladies, a great number of whom were very young, hird a chamber near the hospital for the preparing of linen and making broths, and necessary refreshments for the patients. In this chamber they established girls, taken in from charity, to perform all these offices. Every morning five ladies of the association distributed broths and meats to the patients: and in the afternoon, attended by the grey-sisters, they returned with fruits and pastry *; and it is thus

* Historical.—*Vie de Saint Vincent* by Abbolli Bishop of Rhodes.

that christian charity alone joins with the solidity of benevolence all the charm and the grace of the most delicate and exquisite attention.

Mademoiselle de Guise and Mademoiselle de la Fayette, named to fill these sublime functions, repaired with three other ladies to the *Hotel-Dieu:* there Mademoiselle de la Fayette, as well as her companions, tucked up her sleeves, put on above her mourning dress, a large apron of white linen, and took up a basket full of fruit.* This dress which announced actions of so touching a nature, gave an additional charm to the figure of every one of the ladies; but it particularly embellished Mademoiselle de la Fayette, whose arms and hands were singularly beautiful. In this dress, she ran through all the halls with her companions, distributing refreshments, and speaking to the patients with the most tender affection.

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* Such was in reality the costume of those ladies.

As they were in the middle of the last hall, they heard a rumour significative of some event, and immediately people came running towards them with the information that the king was coming to visit the hospital, and that he would immediately make his appearance. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who had never yet seen him, expected him with a curiosity which occasioned a sort of emotion. Immediately the folding doors opened, and the king was announced. He was followed only by the Duke de Bellegarde, the Marquis de Souvré, and the Count de la Meilleraye. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who was behind Mademoiselle de Guise, advanced precipitately to see him, but her eyes encountering at the same moment those of the king, she retired blushing. However, she observed that he whispered something to the Count de la Meilleraye: she conjectured that he was asking him a question, and that she herself was the object of the question; for the modesty

of a woman, however perfect it may be, never prevents her from remarking any thing in her favour. She found the king's exterior such as it had been painted by Madame de Beaumont; she even thought that it was impossible to convey any idea of the mildness and touching charm of his look and his physiognomy. The king advanced; he first spoke to Mademoiselle de Guise, and then to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, designating her by her name. He spoke in the most obliging and gracious terms to her of the action which she was employed in, and turning towards the other ladies, he made a general application of this eulogy. He went through all the halls. The ladies who were entitled to do the honours of the place followed him every where: he frequently spoke to them, and examined every thing with evident interest. This unexpected visit diffused a universal joy throughout the hospital, and seemed to give new strength to all the patients. Mademoi-

selle de la Fayette, having witnessed the effect produced by the king's presence, was very much affected by it; more than once her eyes were filled with tears. The king on taking his leave left a considerable sum, with orders to place it at the disposal of the holy founder of this pious establishment.

When the king was seated in his carriage, he spoke to the Count de la Meilleraye of Mademoiselle de la Fayette, with a warmth he seldom displayed. She had in reality produced the most profound impression on his heart, and left an inextinguishable recollection in his imagination. How could he forget this first interview, having seen this beautiful and brilliant figure under the angelic form of compassionate and beneficent piety, and the most touching goodness!...Louis at last decided on leaving his solitude, and that very evening he appeared in the queen's circle. On entering, his eyes sought Mademoiselle de la Fayette: her mourn-

ing; and the extreme simplicity of her dress, destitute of every species of ornament, might have sufficed to distinguish her at the very first glance in the midst of a circle of women dressed with the richest stuffs, and loaded with diamonds. The queen called Mademoiselle de la Fayette to her, to present her to the king, who said obligingly with a smile, that she had already *presented* herself in the morning, in the most interesting manner. He spoke of the *Hotel-Dieu*, and extolled with warmth the piety of the charitable ladies. After this general conversation, he approached Mademoiselle de la Fayette, and spoke to her for more than half an hour of the Countess de Brégi, whose virtue he extolled, and of the countess's sister, whom he called a heroine. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, hearing the praise of persons whose memory she revered and cherished, replied with an expression of gratitude and sensibility: she completely captivated Louis, who not daring to prolong this conversa-

tion much more, separated from her, sighing; but he remained all the evening, a thing which he never used to do: he spoke to all the women with a mildness and winningness of manner which were remarked; for in a circle we are never so amiable with every person as when we have a passionate desire of pleasing only one. The most flattering and intoxicating praise is that which we receive universally before the beloved object.

The king returned next day to the queen's circle: there he appeared still more amiable than the day before, and to be occupied in an especial manner with Mademoiselle de la Fayette. Every mind was at that time agitated with political events: the Spaniards were making a fearful progress in France: they had effected a descent in Provence, and information had just come from another quarter that they had taken Corbie in Picardy. Louis announced to the council in the morning that he was on the point of

setting off without delay to put himself at the head of his troops to repulse the Spaniards. Men and money were wanting: the situation of France was so alarming, that the genius of Richelieu was alarmed, and for a moment he had even thoughts of withdrawing from affairs; but the Cardinal de la Valette animated his courage and his hopes, and for the glory of France, this great minister continued to retain the sovereign authority.*

Louis, on the eve of his departure for the army, in so critical a moment, had every eye fixed on him, and excited a general interest: they called to mind the brilliant courage he had already shown in war, and particularly at the siege of Royan in Saintonge, where he four times mounted the parapet to reconnoitre the place with the evident danger of his life;† they still recollected the valour of which he had at the same time given the most

* Historical. † Historical.

distinguished testimony in Poitou, when, at the head of his guards, he passed at midnight into the isle of Rhé, and drove Soubise from it, after defeating the troops which defended that important post *. Mademoiselle de la Fayette heard all these anecdotes, and many others of the same nature, repeated the whole day through. She saw only in Louis an interesting hero. She forgot his weaknesses and his injustice: she thought only of his courage, his amiable qualities, and the dangers to which he was to be exposed: the air of the king, always melancholy, but serene, and his calm behaviour, added to the interest she felt for him in secret. The king publicly announced that he would set out as soon as the levy of twenty thousand men made at Paris by his orders should be completed: he said that it should be almost entirely composed of servants and apprentices†, and he added that this

* Historical. † Which was the case.

little army would not be the worse for it, because every Frenchman upon occasion becomes an excellent soldier.

The queen and nearly all the ladies being engaged at play, the king sat down beside Mademoiselle de la Fayétte, who was not playing, and he conversed a long time with her. Mademoiselle de la Fayette spoke in general of the melancholy which a departure for war occasions to those who remain behind. "Happy are they," said the king, "who are personally regretted!....They have an additional motive for loving glory: they ought to pursue it with ardour when it can honour the object of their love!.... But when we are not loved, courage is without mérit, and without recompense." ....These words produced a strong impression on Mademoiselle de la Fayette; the king remarked it, he looked at her steadily, and after a moment's silence began again. "I hope," said he, in a low voice, "that we shall resume this conversation . . . . I earnestly desire it."

With these words he withdrew without waiting an answer. Mademoiselle de la Fayette fixed her eyes upon him with emotion, and she was thoughtful and absent during the remainder of the evening. When she was alone with the Marchioness de Beaumont, the latter said, "Every body is of opinion that the king is in love with you, but in his own way," continued she, "a chaste and timid love, to which even in thought he will never give that profane name. The Count de la Meilleraye asserts that he has *all the symptoms of an extreme passion* for you, and that he had not any such for Mademoiselle de Hautefort, whom he loved but feebly." "I do not know the king," answered Mademoiselle de la Fayette, "but I own that I have lost many of my prejudices against him, because I think I can discover that he has never been correctly appreciated. His principles are too austere to allow him to yield to a criminal passion; he is capable of friendship, and it is necessary for him to

open his heart; his confidence has been abused: perhaps he seeks for truth, perhaps he is worthy of hearing it; if he asks me the truth, I shall not dissemble it." "I am very certain of that; and if you could give him courage to reign by himself, and to shake off the yoke of the cardinal, what a service you would render to France!"...."We are speaking of chimeras: the king will not consult me, nor require the truth from me; besides he is going to set out." "Very well, he will find you on his return." "Let us drop this folly....but let us pity this brave, feeling, and able prince, who fills his station so ill. It is evident that he feels, that he suffers, and that he is unhappy!...If he had a real friend, he might have been a worthy successor to Henry IV. This is a distressing reflection!" "Let us hope, however: he is yet very young!"—"It is said he spoke this morning with much firmness to the deputies of parliament, who refused to register the edicts for the

sums necessary to carry on the war.— 'Yes, the money which I demand,' said he to them, 'is neither for play nor extravagant expences; it is not for myself that I demand it, but for the interest and glory of the nation. Those who oppose my wishes in this, do more harm to me than the Spaniards; but I shall find means of enforcing obedience.*'" "It must be owned there is energy in that discourse . . . Ah! I am persuaded that he is not known."

The following days the king regularly visited at the queen's, and appeared always equally occupied with Mademoiselle de la Fayette; but his timidity would not permit him to converse long with her at a time, for he perceived that he was anxiously observed. On the day before his departure for the army, he went in the morning to the queen, and on leaving that princess, he stopped in the

* Historical. The parliament ended by registering almost every edict.

closet where the maids of honour were: he approached Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who, with one of her companions, was in the recess of a window, and the companion having withdrawn, the king took her place, and ordered Mademoiselle de la Fayette to sit down beside him. Mademoiselle de la Fayette being at a great distance from her companions, and as it were tête-à-tête with the king, recollected with extreme emotion that it was in this manner he conversed with Mademoiselle de Hautefort during his intimacy with her....“ I come,” said the king to her with a low and trembling voice, “ I come to bid you adieu.” At these words, Mademoiselle de la Fayette bowed, without possessing sufficient strength to answer: she looked down, and Louis felt a keen emotion on observing tears steal down her cheeks.... “ I have had,” he continued, “ but few moments of happiness in my life, but this is one.” .... To these words, pronounced in a still lower voice,

and with greater agitation, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, equally embarrassed and affected, returned for answer, that every French heart would express the sentiment which she felt, if the king should deign to inquire. "No, Mademoiselle," replied Louis, "I wish only to speak to your's ... And if I there find the friendship which I have hitherto sought in vain, my entire confidence will be the price.... Perhaps, on knowing my character, my situation, and my misfortunes, you will approve of many things which I have been forced to do, and for which I have been very unjustly blamed. But I set out to-morrow : I carry a pleasing idea along with me.... Preserve that touching sensibility for me; . . . if heaven permit me to return, it will be my consolation"...This conversation was interrupted by the Duchess de Chevreuse, who, issuing out of the queen's apartment, crossed the closet. The king, who had risen on hearing the door open, advanced towards the duchess, and spoke to her with

embarrassment. The duchess seized this moment of discomposure to ask a favour. This solicitation, which removed every idea of what had been passing, freed the king from his embarrassment; and, through gratitude, he instantly granted, with the very best grace, what the duchess demanded. On his departure the duchess, laughing, sat down beside Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who had recommenced, with an air of great application, her labours on a small work of tapestry. With a smile, she asked the duchess the cause of her gaiety. "It is," answered the duchess, "because I have just displayed an admirable presence of mind; and as you are commencing your career at court, I shall relate this trait for your instruction. The king, without hating me, is not fond of me; and he is somewhat in dread of my inconsiderate character and satirical humour. Hence, of all those who might happen to interrupt his conversation with you, I am exactly the person who would give him the

greatest displeasure. He advanced towards me with a disconcerted air. I instantly felt the advantage which might be drawn from this favourable occasion. I know that people are always obliging when they are afraid, especially in the first agitation... I instantly demanded a very important favour for myself; and, as I foresaw, he did not hesitate a moment in granting it. I shall be grateful for it, and shall not relate this little adventure to any person; but you must agree with me that this is admirable." Mademoiselle de la Fayette agreed in nothing: she even feigned not to comprehend any thing of what the duchess had said; and she endeavoured to give the most simple turn to the marked preference which the king had displayed for her. The duchess rallied her on her reserve and her prudence: "On the king's return," said she, "we will resume this conversation. I shall give you good advice; and if you will follow my counsel, in less than six months you will turn the

whole court upside down, and it has great need of an entire regeneration. It is in an astonishing state of apathy; nothing goes on; every spring is paralysed; we must give it new motion and life; and nothing is so easy if you will only exactly follow the plan which I shall chalk out for you." Mademoiselle de la Fayette took this very serious discourse of the Duchess de Chevreuse for a mere piece of pleasantry.

As soon as Mademoiselle de la Fayette was disentangled from this conversation, she invented a pretext for retiring; and she went and shut herself up for the purpose of reflecting by herself without constraint on the last adieu of the king. The king had at last explained himself clearly: he wanted a friend; he had announced his choice, and promised *an entire confidence.* His religious principles were so well known, that his intimacy with Mademoiselle de Hautefort had not given rise to the smallest slander. It would therefore be a ridiculous prudery

to repulse his friendship, and even a sort of indecency to suppose him to be influenced by other sentiments than those which he displayed with so much candour and simplicity. In short, he affirmed that neither his character nor the motives of his conduct were known. How much she was disposed to believe so! with what sincerity she abjured all the prejudices which she had against him!.... The object which pleases and is found amiable, and by which we believe ourselves loved, possesses all the most powerful means of persuasion.. Mademoiselle de la Fayette could not be deceived with respect to the extreme indolence of Louis; but then she could urge such powerful reasons to induce him to get the better of it. The vanquishing this difficulty did not depress her imagination. Women love nothing so much as a field for the exercise of their creative talents: to correct, improve, and inspire, is to act, govern, and reign--

the only glorious and legitimate empire which nature has granted to women, and which the laws cannot take from them. With what virtuous liberty and energy Mademoiselle de la Fayette resolved to speak to the king when he should open his heart to her! Undoubtedly he was not so weak at bottom as he was stated to be; for had not he spoken to the Parliament with the greatest firmness? and had not he displayed a great deal also in continuing the war with vigour, and setting off to put himself at the head of his troops? With his talents, his sensibility, and good advice, why should he not equal his father in renown? why not even surpass him? Friendship would inspire him with his activity and his constancy in laborious and difficult operations. He possessed his courage and his intellect; and he had an advantage over Henry IV. in the possession of morals of the most perfect purity. In short, if it was flattering to obtain the esteem and confi-

dence of a hero, it was still more so to form one worthy of the admiration of the universe.

These seductive ideas floated still somewhat vaguely in the head of Mademoiselle de la Fayette; but they were germinating there, and could not fail soon to develope themselves, and to carry her sentiments and her hopes to the highest pitch of enthusiasm.

The king took his departure at the dawning of the following day, followed by nearly the whole of his courtiers of every age. After his departure, for several days many women were seen to display all the exaggeration of affliction for just subjects of alarm, while others betrayed, in spite of all their efforts, the secret griefs which they ought to have concealed. This affectation on the one hand, and constraint on the other, diffused throughout the court the most gloomy sadness and ennui. At last, however, it was allowed that they ought to attempt to get over it; and without

owning that it was possible for them to be amused, they immediately pursued every amusement with their accustomed ardour.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette took advantage of some days of liberty to go to Vincennes to the country-house which her aunt had left her. She took the Marchioness de Beaumont along with her; and one evening, when they were alone together, she put her in mind of the promise which she had given, of relating the principal events of her life. "I consent," said the Marchioness; "but I am going to reveal the most important of all my secrets to you—a secret which honour and love prescribe the concealment of, especially to the object the most interesting to us. You must therefore give me your word never to reveal it." Mademoiselle de la Fayette gave the promise which her friend exacted, and the marchioness related her story in the following terms:

## HISTORY OF THE MARCHIONESS DE BEAUMONT.

MARRIED, at fifteen and a few months, to a man of fifty, I was happy in being allied to a rich, worthy, and amiable husband, possessed of an excellent character. I left the convent with all the innocence of a boarder, utterly ignorant of the world, and unacquainted with theatres; and whose only idea of dissipation was taken from the recreations of the convent. I regretted the good nuns and my companions; but, to tell you the truth, I soon forgot my grief in the joy of receiving fine clothes and an elegant *corbeille*, and the pleasure of making an infinity of small presents to my female friends. Having never worn any thing but our common black convent-dress, with a suitable mantle and head-dress, I was a good deal astonished to see myself, in a mirror, equipped in a rich dress covered with silver and jewels. The day after the marriage I was conducted to

an estate in Burgundy, seventy leagues from Paris. We arrived about mid-day: they were in readiness to receive us. We were met by a cavalcade of peasants, many of whom carried fusils and old carabines loaded with powder, which they fired off in the air in honour of us. I paraded through our village with all the pride of a conqueror who enters an enemy's town in triumph. All the inhabitants were at their doors, and vied with one another in crying *Success to our good lord and our young lady!* My sentiments of vain glory were softened by a keen feeling of a different description, and I could not refrain from tears. In this happy disposition, I admired prodigiously the majesty of our avenue of old elms, three times longer and broader than the beautiful alley of the garden of my convent. The aspect of our ancient castle and its towers was equally a subject of admiration; and my astonishment was at its heighth when all the young village-maidens, dressed in white,

came to offer me flowers, and the old women cakes, small cheeses, and eggs. The education which we receive is well calculated for our happiness; the solitude of a convent, the complete ignorance of the factitious pleasures of the great world, prepare us for the purest and sweetest enjoyments, especially in the class of the nobility, whose wives, when not attached to the court, are destined to pass the greatest part of their lives on their estates.

The day after my arrival in Burgundy was still a day of enchantment for me. I took possession of the vast apartment of Lady of the Castle. I received the homage of the venerable steward, who spoke to me with delight of the late marchioness, my mother-in-law: he appeared so old, that it seemed to me he could have spoken something respecting all the ancestors of the family: he presented all the principal domestics to me. I was proud to think I was about to reign with sovereign authority over so many people. I ran

over every part of the house and offices, the kitchen-gardens, and the park, of which the splendid rows of beeches towered up to the clouds. I saw that it would require at least eight days to enable me to get acquainted with my new empire. I received the visit of the clergyman whom I had already seen in the morning in his mansion-house, and afterwards in the church, where I was received with pomp. In the evening the good pastor came to give his benediction to my chamber,* and at nine o'clock I repaired to the family gallery, where I was presented with a prayer-book, in which I was to read prayers aloud to the whole house assembled together †. On the following

* A ceremony which always took place in those times on the day of the arrival of the Lady of a Castle, newly married, or on the following day.

† A custom which was still regularly kept up in castles, and even in country-houses, about the middle of the last century.

days I visited our neighbours, who received me with the most friendly cordiality. In all these excursions I felt an increase of esteem and affection for M. de Beaumont on seeing how much he was cherished and revered by his domestics and vassals, and the consideration and friendship which his neighbours possessed for him. In this manner I passed two years, the recollection of which will always be dear to me. At the end of this period we set out for Paris; and M. de Beaumont obtained for me a place about the queen's person. I arrived at court at the age of seventeen; but with an enlightened guide, whom I loved and whom I revered. I brought with me to this place, where every thing was to appear so new to me, an excessive timidity, which for a long time induced me to preserve a profound silence, a mind very indifferently cultivated, but possessing correct ideas of rectitude, and a simplicity of taste, which the refined amusements of the great

world have never deprived me of. Notwithstanding my youth, assisted by the sage reflections of M. de Beaumont, I formed much more correct judgments at that time than an infinity of persons possessed of great experience, because they were blinded by their pretensions and by coquetry; whereas I observed every thing with a calm curiosity, and, without passions or illusions, easily discerned the path, because whatever was false struck me as low and vulgar. Rectitude and simplicity, with a little natural talent, impart a discernment which we have little reason to distrust, and which is surprising when we enter the world at my then age; for at that period the taste is less refined, but the instinct much more to be relied on. All my first impressions were correct; all those who displeased me at first sight were at bottom either vicious or ridiculous. In the end I have learned to reflect with more acuteness; but I have never passed such sound judgments.

I had been eight months at court, when I was obliged to leave it for a year in consequence of an event equally unforeseen and disastrous: M. de Beaumont was suddenly attacked by a defluxion in the chest, and fell a victim on the fifth day.... I lost the dearest and most respectable friend. I remained without children, guide, or fortune — and I was not eighteen. The queen permitted me to pass a year in retirement. The Countess de ***, sister and successor to M. de Beaumont, conducted me to an estate in Burgundy which she inherited. I experienced the most painful sensations on finding myself in this chateau, where I was nothing now but a stranger. The good peasants received me with a sensibility which affected me so much the more, as these effusions of their love were quite disinterested, and as they were in a high degree honourable to the memory of their virtuous lord; but in general it seems that gratitude, in all its purity, has taken refuge with this inte-

resting class, and I am persuaded that their very dependence adds to that gratitude from which so many other virtues have their origin. The authority which is not abused inspires a degree of veneration which exalts every sentiment. What would filial piety be without respect! and I am persuaded, if ever the peasantry should cease to be vassals of the proprietors of land, whatever benefit they might receive from the latter, far from loving them, they would merely envy them their wealth, and they would become insolent and ungrateful.

The first weeks I passed in this castle were extremely painful to me; but at length the caresses, the care, and the affectionate proceedings of the countess, gradually weakened these distressing sensations. The Countess de*** possesses virtues, but her character is imperious, and she only loves truly those whom she governs. Her friendship secures an active protection, and at the same time it always produces an entire

dependence. The countess was only acquainted with my gentleness: she had seen me yield a uniform submission to her brother; and without reflecting on the motive of that just obedience, she imagined that I should be equally submissive to all her wishes. She found it perfect in all the little concerns of society; and for five months we lived together in an intimacy altogether undisturbed by any thing unpleasant. The interest which she took in my prosperity induced her to endeavour to make my fortune; and she thought of remarrying me to the Baron d'Urbin, a distant relation of her husband, of the age of thirty-eight, whose only merit was his immense wealth, acquired by unexpected successions. The new possessor of this fortune, his only heirs, were collateral relations whom he did not love. The countess, who had invited him to her chateau, directed his choice to me; but as she saw me sincerely afflicted she agreed with the baron that she should not

speak to me of these sentiments till the expiration of my mourning. In the mean while, he took every opportunity of rendering himself agreeable to me; and the countess never let slip any occasion of praising his goodness and the excellence of his character. Notwithstanding all these endeavours, I was much less struck with his moral qualities than with his disagreeable manners and his absolute want of intellect. I discovered the designs of the countess. I had no desire of seconding them; but that I might retard a most disagreeable explanation, I feigned not to have the smallest suspicion of them.

I had been ten months in Burgundy when a new neighbour arrived whom I was unacquainted with. The Count de Melcy purchased a superb estate two leagues from our's. He was of the age of fifty-two, very rich, very ambitious, a miser in his disposition, but pompous through vanity; and he had an only son of the age of twenty, the Saint-Ibal,

whom you now see attached to the Count de Soissons.... He paid my sister-in-law a visit, accompanied by his son; and she received him as an old friend. Saint-Ibal, who had not yet been presented at court, did not then possess that vivacity and brilliancy for which he is now so remarkable; but the timidity which is so becoming in youth; eyes full of fire, a look which expressed all that his tongue failed to utter, gave him other graces by no means less seductive. In this first visit, I clearly saw that he remarked the pretensions of the Baron d'Urbin to me, and the protection which he received from the countess, and that he held them in derision. I saw still more clearly the impression which I made on his heart.... He contrived to show this in a thousand different ways, but with such admirable ingenuity that not one of the society had the smallest suspicion of it. These observations, which I made with extreme emotion, were not without danger for me.... A

sentiment absolutely new to me began all of a sudden to disturb my repose, and overturn my destiny. The Count de Melcy told us that his son was going to travel for two years, and that he would set out in the course of six weeks. My sister-in-law took this opportunity of giving a sort of moral lecture to Saint-Ibal, exhorting him to preserve in his travels the principles instilled into him. "Yes, madam," said he warmly; "and I swear, from the bottom of my soul, to bring back with me the same sentiments."... A look conveyed to me the true meaning of this oath. He quitted us to return with his father to his chateau; and he left me confounded with his ingenious boldness, but more especially at the effect which it had produced on my heart.

On the second day afterwards, as I was in my room, which looked into the court, about nine o'clock in the morning I heard the noise of a horse arriving at full gallop. The impetuosity of the horse represented to my imagination who

the horseman was. I flew trembling to my window and recognized Saint-Ibal. He was already at the foot of the steps before the house. He sprung from his horse. I saluted him: he pressed his hand to his heart with the most passionate expression. I withdrew under an inexpressible agitation. A few minutes afterwards I was sent for to breakfast. I found Saint-Ibal in the dining-room: he gave me an invitation from his father to dine next day with them. He breakfasted with us. After breakfast he returned to the salon and seated himself at some distance from me. That my countenance and eyes might be fixed on something, I took up my ordinary work, which was a knit-purse. I let my silk ball several times fall, and Saint-Ibal always took it up. At length he kept it, to avoid, as he said, laughing, the trouble of picking it up. He sat at the same distance, but we were connected by the thread which I was working with, and the ball of which he held. He found means with this slender communication of conversing with me so as

to be understood. From time to time he drew the thread gently towards him with an expression which seemed to demand an answer. This answer was of so vague and new a kind, it was so easy to be disavowed, that after a good deal of hesitation I could not refrain from making it. I drew, in turn, the thread towards me, and then I felt the thread tremble and vibrate under my fingers .... and I could not mistake the expression of trouble, joy, and gratitude! My work fell from my hands.... I took it up; the thread continued to speak to me, and I still answered. All this time we were not interrupted by the conversation. What eyes, even the most penetrating, could have discovered this mysterious language? The Baron d'Urbin, who was walking up and down the room, frequently came up to me to speak. Saint-Ibal then gave the thread two gentle shakes. This sort of proceeding was a clear indication to me of his discontent and jealousy. To dissipate this rising discontent, instead of answering the ba-

ron, I turned my head another way. All at once the baron seated himself beside me: at that instant Saint-Ibal gave such a rude pull to the thread that it broke.... I rose; I went and took another place, and I gave over working. Half an hour afterwards Saint-Ibal was obliged to quit us without having it in his power to whisper a single word to me, or even to approach me, so closely was I besieged by the baron and my sister-in-law. I repaired to my chamber, not for the purpose of reflecting sagely on this intrigue, commenced with so much impudence, but that I might think of Saint-Ibal without constraint or interruption. When we have not yet had any impulse of coquetry, when we have no experience in this way, and when we are only eighteen, we are much more easily entangled than a coquette of thirty, because the greatest follies in love are produced by sensibility and sincerity. I ought to have been afraid of the youth of Saint-Ibal; but I only saw in his age

a security for his candour. He was to go abroad for two years; but then he had promised me to return with the same sentiments. His father no doubt destined some rich heiress for him; but this father adored him, and the interest and happiness of his son would easily get the better of every other consideration. These hopes appeared to me so reasonable and so solid, that I did not experience the smallest uneasiness respecting the future.

We went to dine with the Count de Melcy: I carried my work there. Saint-Ibal, always at a distance from me, took possession, in a playful manner, of my ball of silk; and having no other means of corresponding together, we recommenced the mute conversation which he had invented, and which both of us so well understood. I passed two days after this without seeing Saint-Ibal: at length he returned with his father, and my purse was finished that day. The baron then pretended that I had promised it to him. This I positively de-

nied: he insisted. My sister-in-law, with a great deal of dryness, gave false evidence in favour of the baron. During this discussion I felt an extreme degree of impatience. I was at an open window which looked into the garden: I threw the purse on a very high lime-tree, saying, "Take it who will." The baron rushed out with precipitation. A moment afterwards Saint-Ibal also went out, quite secure that he would reach the lime-tree before him, notwithstanding of this little advantage, but with the utmost tranquillity, and as if without any design. A number of people were in the saloon: the conversation turned on other subjects, and the purse was no more thought of. However, I was always at the window, and I had my eye on the lime-tree. The baron, who was very large and very unwieldy, and who had no suspicion of the intentions of Saint-Ibal, nor even that he had a rival, had gone in quest of a large stick to shake the branches of the tree, or to catch hold of

the purse. During this interval I observed Saint-Ibal spring forward in an instant, and climb to the very top of the tree; but he was a long time searching for the purse which lay concealed among the leaves. At length he found it at the very moment when the baron arrived with a long and enormous pole.... Saint-Ibal descended from the tree, and, shewing him the purse, with a triumphant air, exclaimed, "It belongs to me!" "How!" said the baron, "and by what right?" "By the right of conquest," replied Saint-Ibal. With these words he put the purse into his bosom, and left the baron quite stupified; and he returned to the saloon with a very simple and a very sage look. The baron, who felt irritated, walked about in the park till night. He did not make his appearance again till Saint-Ibal and all the other visitors had left us. He did not fail to tell his adventure to the countess. She delivered me a very long lecture on the subject. She told me I ought to have shewn my displeasure at the im-

pertinent conduct of Saint-Ibal; a conduct equally foolish and ridiculous. I answered that the whole scene had diverted me very much, and that if she had seen the baron marching gravely along, dragging a large pole after him, she would have laughed as well as me; and that it was altogether impossible for me to be angry at such an amusing incident. The countess replied with bitterness. I returned no answer, that the conversation might be droppad; but from that day her assiduity about me redoubled, and her active vigilance did not leave me a single moment of liberty. She did not stop here. She spoke to the Count de Melcy, who, on his side also, never quitted his son, and at the end of seven or eight days the count, under the pretext of business of the greatest importance, returned all of a sudden, to Paris with his son, without allowing him even time to take his leave of his neighbours. Fifteen days afterwards, he ordered him away for England, from whence he was to go by sea to Portugal

and Spain, and from thence to Italy, the termination of his travels.

This departure plunged me into excessive grief, and the most profound chagrin. No more interesting visits! no more any hope of again enjoying an hour of joy and happiness! With what indifference I heard the passage of horses and carriages over the drawbridges!.... I had adopted the custom in all chateaus of rising with the break of day: but with what anguish of heart I now saw the commencement of the day which was to pass without leaving me a single agreeable recollection! My bad humour was vented on the baron; but he was so stupid that he did not comprehend the disagreeable things I was telling him on all occasions. To have produced any impression on him it would have been necessary for me to load him with downright abuse. He merely discovered that my air was *somewhat sombre*, which he attributed to the state of my health, respecting which he was perpetually interrogating me. My sister-in-law, who

possessed more penetration, easily knew what was passing in my heart; but she feigned not to have the least suspicion of it, for counting wholly on the long absence of Saint-Ibal, the opposition of his father, and the immense fortune of the baron, she persisted in her project, persuaded also that I should be unable to resist her eloquence and her ascendancy.

At the end of the period of my mourning, the countess at last spoke to me without any reserve of the Baron d'Urbin and his passion for me. I returned for answer that I had no thoughts of marrying again, and that I had besides an invincible aversion for the baron. At this the countess flew into a rage: she wished to insist; but I cut her short with a declaration in a most firm tone that I would never change my sentiment or opinion, and that she would see that my resolution was final: at this she became quite furious, and in her rage and indignation loaded me with every bitter and cutting epithet which she could think

of; she reproached me with the most insulting irony, for entertaining sentiments of affection for a headstrong fool, an idiot, and a child: in this manner she chose to designate Saint-Ibal. I listened coolly to all this torrent of invectives without answering a single word; at length I rose and addressed her thus:—"Receive my adieu, madam: I shall demand horses, and return instantly to Paris, to resume my situation with the queen." With these words I withdrew precipitately: she called violently after me, but I did not so much as turn round: I heard her exclaiming:—*What horrible ingratitude!*...I opened the door and went out, and I instantly gave orders for my departure.—Two hours afterwards I entered the carriage, and took the road for Paris.

For fifteen days before, the countess had left nothing undone to ruin Saint-Ibal in my estimation; she had frequently witnessed the destruction in this manner of esteem and good-will by hatred and envy: she was ignorant that all these

means, and even calumny, false reports, plots, and cabals, not only fail to produce any effect on a person whose heart is profoundly touched, but even serve to draw the ties closer which they wish to dissolve; whatever be the nature of the sentiment we feel, whether it be love or friendship; for every thing like persecution only attaches us more passionately to the object we truly love. What reparation ought we not to make for such malevolence!—To thwart openly sentiments of a strong nature is the sure means of confirming and exalting them. This constancy is a mode of vengeance quite allowable, and which it is delightful to exercise towards those who declare themselves the enemies of an object that is dear to us. The scene which had taken place only made me renew with fresh ardour the oath of either being Saint-Ibal's, or of preserving for ever my liberty.

On arriving at Paris I found a letter

from Saint-Ibal, dated from London, conceived in the following terms:—

"I was obliged to part, against my will, without seeing you, without once holding the dear thread which would have expressed my grief and my regret! Did you sufficiently comprehend that imperfect language which love invented for you? How could I hope this, when I feel that it is impossible for me to paint to you in a letter that passion which at its commencement was so tender and so violent, that it seems as if my love for you had begun with my first breath! Did not I read in your heart from the very first day? Did not I see your disdain and your aversion for him who aspired to your hand, and the despotism which he wished to exercise over you? Without telling me a single word, have you not revealed every thing to me, your situation, your family secrets, and your sentiments? Do not these prodigies of love prove that we were born for one

another?....Ah, do not doubt it—I am your's; and I am going to pass two dreadful years without seeing you!.... I was strongly tempted to break off this cruel journey, but I should have irritated the best of fathers, and I am only twenty! I wish to acquire the right of saying to him: — *Notwithstanding absence and distance, I have loved for two years the object most worthy of being beloved!* What could he object to that? And how would it then be possible for him not to subscribe to what would constitute the happiness of my life? This is the reason for my departure. You see that we owe every thing to love, even reason. Adieu! I have neither letters nor promises from you, but I carry with me the purse which I gained, or rather which you gave me by throwing it on the tree! With what transport I contemplate that work, the charming tissue of mystery and love, every mesh of which recalls to me the expression of a sentiment, and a moment of joy and happiness! Work con-

tinually during our separation, and only for me; and when an immoveable thread shall pass under your fingers, vouchsafe a sigh for the absence every instant of which will be counted over by me with such grief and anguish."

In this letter I found whatever could touch my heart; still however I had courage enough not to answer it: I thought that before taking such a step I ought to wait the consent of his father. The pleasures and the intrigues of the court were unable to withdraw me from the sentiment with which I was wholly occupied. The queen received me with the utmost goodness: she spoke to me more than once of my situation: she told me I was too young not to marry again, and that she would think of it. I answered her by returning a vague expression of thanks. About a month afterwards the queen told me one day, with an obliging tone, that she was disposed to scold me; that she knew I had refused to marry the Baron d'Urbin, who possessed

so great a fortune, and was the most virtuous man in the world, and that she was assured I entertained a romantic passion for the young Saint-Ibal; that by this conduct I distressed my sister-in-law, by whom I was adored, and that such conduct was neither prudent nor wise, and the more so," added the queen, "as a bad account is given of the character of this young Saint-Ibal, who is besides a mere infant, for I am told he is not more than seventeen or eighteen." I easily discovered from this discourse the intrigues of my sister-in-law, who had been fifteen days at Paris, where she came with the sole intention of injuring me. "Madam," said I, "your majesty is very ill informed: my sister-in-law does not *adore* me. The Baron d'Urbin is a stupid man, whom a woman possessed of good sense who intends to be faithful will never marry. M. de Saint-Ibal is twenty instead of seventeen; his character is very good. I have shown no preference for him, and I have the inclinations which

I am supposed to entertain. I shall have sufficient time to reflect on them, for he is now on his travels, and will not return in less than two years." The queen smiled. "This is not the first time," said she, "that I have received an unfaithful report: fortunately," she added, "I have adopted the custom of never pronouncing a positive judgment on any ill which I hear, or on any complaint which is made to me." This conversation was interrupted by an incident foreign to my story, but which I cannot forbear to relate. The Countess de Senecé, a lady about the queen's person, entered with a countenance of the utmost consternation, saying that she had discovered a thing altogether unheard of.—She then stated that having the care of the queen's jewels, she had put by, for some time back, a considerable number of them, which had been successively broken, and that wishing to have them repaired, she perceived with the greatest surprise that something was wanting for every dress;

one wanted a chain, another a ring or a stone, &c. which was quite inconceivable, as she had always kept the key of the box in which these jewels were contained. At this recital the queen began to laugh. "It is evident," said she, "that these jewels have been stolen; but do not alarm yourself, I know the robber." "How, madam?" "Yes, and I am the person. You shall hear the fact," continued the queen.—"You know that I am applied to by numbers of unfortunate persons.---I give money when I have it, but sometimes I have none, and I feel such pain in refusing the assistance which is asked from me, that I have invented means of supplying the place of money: when I have none I break a necklace and give away a piece of it, a plume of feathers, or a bracelet*." This affecting avowal of the queen produced a strong impression on us. From that day forwards I attached myself sincerely to

* Historical.—*Memoires de Madame de Motteville.*

that virtuous princess, who is so deserving of being beloved for her own sake.

Among the men admitted into the select society of the queen, I particularly remarked the old Duke of Bellegarde.---I regarded with curiosity this first love of the beautiful Gabrielle d'Estrées*; in him I imagined I beheld all the gallantry of the court of Henry IV. His figure is always noble, and his physiognomy agreeable. --- He was handsome five years ago, and I know that eight or nine years before he had inspired Mademoiselle de Guise, who was then only sixteen, and the most beautiful person at court, with a strong passion for him. This love was crossed by Madame de Guise, who entertained the same sentiments for the Duke†. Those men who have been eminently successful with women, when they can preserve themselves from becoming silly, and have a little wit, derive in their old age from this frivolous

* Historical. † Historical.

sort of celebrity advantages which give them in the world a kind of consideration quite peculiar. They arrogate to themselves the *important* right of deciding imperiously whether the young people who make their debut in the world are amiable or pretty, and their judgments are considered as oracles. I was fortunate enough to please the Duke de Bellegarde: without him I should have long, perhaps always, been confounded in the crowd, but his suffrage drew on me the general attention, and caused me to be immediately distinguished by the queen. Princes may themselves discern merit when they possess it; but as they are always absent, and little occupied with other people, they require to be informed of the charms of wit: they frequently mistake the adroit insinuations of flattery for grace; and even when they are in a state of judging correctly, it is very rare, as they do not listen, that they can be struck with superiority of talents in a mere conversation, or perceive their own

deficiency when any thing they do is approved of. The Duke de Bellegarde in praising me established my reputation: he was believed: he immediately gave rise to a prejudice in my favour, which gave me confidence, and brought me into vogue. The queen was persuaded that I should please and amuse her; this idea alone furnished me the means, because it authorised me to speak without constraint; and the right to say every thing always renders a person amiable who is incapable of abusing it, and who without malice or ambition is natural and gay.

Eighteen months elapsed, during which I regularly received passionate letters from Saint-Ibal.—The Count de Melcy frequently came to court; I endeavoured to please him, and I flattered myself with having succeeded, when one day he demanded the favour of a particular conversation with me. I fixed next day, and I waited with a great degree of emotion—He came, and after a long preamble, told me that he had discovered his son's pas-

sion for me, and he declared that he had entered into other engagements for him. "And my word," he added with a solemn tone, "is inviolable and sacred." "But how, Sir," I answered, "could you enter into a positive engagement without consulting your son?" "My son has always been submissive to my wishes, and if he ceased to be so, I should disinherit him and marry again next day:—thus, Madam, if you wish to be the cause of a total disunion between a father and his son, continue to nourish his foolish hopes, otherwise put an end to them for ever." On hearing these words, indignation rendered me for an instant mute: at length, recovering the use of speech, "I see," said I, "you count the happiness of your son nothing." Here he interrupted me with a malicious smile. "It is true, Madam, I reckon romantic notions very little, and a grand establishment a great deal."—"Enough, Sir, you may rest assured you have for ever extinguished in me the desire of becoming your daughter-in-law. I own I love your

son, but in listening to you I make the renunciation almost without effort." "This is not enough, Madam; it is necessary for the happiness of my son that he should be for ever ignorant of this conversation, and that he should attribute your refusal to your indifference or your change. If he learns the step I now take, he will persist in his folly; and I have the honour of telling you, I shall disinherit him, marry again, banish him from my house, and never see him again as long as I live.—Adieu, Madam, reflect well on this. I shall see from your conduct, whether there is any truth in the sublime generosity of the romantic sentiments which inspire you with so much disdain for ambitious ideas." On pronouncing these words, he quitted me. I remained petrified.—My rage equalled my grief. Such were the sang froid and the character of this man that the smallest hope was not left me. What course could I take? By revealing my sentiments to Saint-Ibal, and confiding

what had taken place to him, I should deprive him for ever of the false but highly respectable opinion which he entertained of the affection of his father; I should embroil them together; I should render myself the subject of universal blame; I should destroy the fortune of the man I loved; I had none myself to offer him, and I should procure him the reputation of a bad son and a madman. On the other hand, how could I bring myself to assure Saint-Ibal that I never loved him? True I had never answered any of his letters; but he devised the reason of that himself: he saw that I waited the consent of his father, and consequently his own return, before I would wholly explain myself.— How could I disavow the understanding established between us at the Chateau de * * *? or how could I declare to him that I had changed my mind, and that my heart was no longer the same? These reflections distracted me; however, from the first moment I resolved to sacrifice

myself; and I have had the courage to adhere to that resolution.

From this fatal interview, far from desiring the return of Saint-Ibal, I dreaded it above all things; and I shuddered at the thought of the cruel state of embarrassment in which I should inevitably be placed.

Saint-Ibal at length returned after the expiration of the two years. What was my agitation on seeing him one morning enter my chamber! Joy and felicity was spread on his countenance—He threw himself at my feet, exclaiming: "You may now answer me, my father knows all." "Well?"—"Well, this is his answer:—*You must first, my son, be certain that you are beloved. Speak to Madame de Beaumont, and then I shall explain myself.*" "These are his own words," continued Saint-Ibal, "and is not that a consent?" "Do not believe him"—"Heavens, what an idea! my father's wishes are centered in my happiness; his frankness is equal to his affection for me---Ah! speak without

dread and without delay, that I may instantly return to this good and tender father, who will share my joy when I inform him: I have learnt nothing from her conversation." In expressing himself thus, Saint-Ibal could not retain his tears, and mine flowed involuntarily. This illusion respecting his father wrung my heart; I felt how shocking it would be to deprive him of it, and I resolved to sacrifice myself; but what a stab I was going to give him, and how could I bring myself to do it!---Trembling, and scarcely able to speak, I forced him to sit down, and I conjured him to listen to me with calmness; he obeyed with equal alarm and trouble. ---He looked at me in silence: at length I told him with a broken voice: "Saint-Ibal, I can never be your's."---"Great God! when there is no obstacle to separate us, when my father's consent is ready."--- "I cannot be your's."---"And why?"— "Let this suffice you, ask me no farther." "What! shall I submit to such a dreadful sentence without demanding an explanation! Can you expect it? Cruel woman!

have you then deceived me? Were those mysterious hopes you gave me before my departure merely an amusement for you!—Barbarous amusement! Did you not see then the sincerity with which I loved you? How could you allow me to indulge in so fatal an error! And my letters, which proved to you the constancy of my violent passion, how could you receive them without undeceiving me!---At least, answer me--- You did not love me?"---"Your letters! I never received any."

I had meditated this untruth, which appeared indispensible, and which completed the despair and fury of Saint-Ibal; he accused me of falsehood, ingratitude, and perjury; his rage went to my soul, but it proved his love, and in that I found a sort of consolation. I persisted so stoutly in maintaining that I had never received his letters, that at last he believed me; but he still continued to reproach me with equal bitterness for the hopes I had given him at the Château de * * *; he quitted me in despair, and left me in a more

pitiable condition than his own. Resolved, however, on sacrificing myself, I experienced a sort of relief in the idea that this dreadful explanation was over, and that I was relieved from it. Alas! what would have been the use of telling him the truth---I could not own my sentiments to him without discovering the harshness and horrible falsity of his father, and without depriving him of his esteem for one whom his duty commanded him to revere. Saint-Ibal really admired and cherished his father! Was it not a crime to annihilate this sweet and sacred sentiment in his heart; a sentiment love even could not replace nor indemnify him for the loss of! Were I to be so weak, would not Saint-Ibal himself one day blame me for it, and regret the fortune, the rank, the honours which he would lose from the enmity of his father? All these reflections served to fix me irrevocably in the generous design which I had resolved on.

The unhappy Saint-Ibal, unable to conceal his grief, deposited it in the perfidious

bosom of him who was the cause of it: he confided every thing to his father, who clearly discovered from his despair, that I had kept his secret and mine. I thought that this man, so incapable himself of generosity, would at last be confounded at mine; but I was mistaken: grovelling souls admire nothing, because they disbelieve in every thing either great or disinterested. They always suppose the vilest motives for the noblest actions, and they then applaud themselves in secret for their imagined penetration, which they consider as a great proof of superiority and talent. The Count de Melcy was persuaded that his positive and absolute declaration of disinheriting his son had taken from me all intention of marrying him, and that I acted with perfect sincerity and without effort, as the marriage with Saint-Ibal would be no longer advantageous for me, but on the contrary the very worst marriage that I could make. This manner of judging, and the violent grief of his son, completely quieted him with respect to my conduct, and were

the most complete security with him for my discretion. When his son questioned him respecting the men whom I saw, the count told him that Varicarville, attached to the Count de Soissons, was desperately in love with me, and that I was suspected to share his sentiments. Saint-Ibal returned in a rage to me next day, to reproach me with this pretended passion: it was easy for me to justify myself by proving to him that I had long ceased to see Varicarville, who in reality had offered to marry me. "But who is my rival then?" said Saint-Ibal: "be at least sincere with me; own that you once had an impulse of preference for me, and that afterwards a more fortunate object has inspired you with a real passion: you were only eighteen when you allowed me to indulge those fatal hopes; your youth may render you excusable; but open your heart to me, and pity the situation in which I am: your sincerity and confidence would mitigate my sufferings. Do you also reject me as a friend?—You

weep!—Your conduct is inexplicable. Why do you weep?...Do you also entertain an unfortunate passion?"—"Yes, Saint-Ibal, very unfortunate."—"Ungrateful woman, what do I hear?...Great God! then it is true that you entertain an affection for another!—You own it to me then at last. Ah! what perfidy!—However, finish your cruelty: who is then the object whom you passionately love?"—"I cannot tell you." "I shall discover him you may rest assured; and as I shall not then owe the discovery to your confidence, nothing can then withdraw this hated rival from my fury!"—"I shall never marry him." "Why, is he engaged?" "No, he is free." "What obstacle then separates you?" "An invincible obstacle." "Beloved by you, can he possibly have another sentiment? You sigh! O providence! he does not return your love. How I pity you! you feel all that I suffer."

Saint-Ibal continued to interrogate me a long time respecting this supposed

rival, but obtaining no information, he left me more discontented than ever. Agreeably to what he announced to me, he made new inquiries from his father and others, and the result of them was the strangest idea: he was told that monsieur, the king's brother, treated me with a great deal of attention and kindness, and he imagined that I entertained in secret an extravagant passion for that prince. I wished at first to drive this foolish idea out of his head, but in vain; in the end, without altogether agreeing to it, I left him to entertain this notion. I was influenced by several motives; I felt that if Saint-Ibal was not thoroughly persuaded that I entertained a violent passion for another, he would soon discover my fatal secret, and as it was necessary to give him an imaginary rival, monsieur greatly preferable to any other, because Saint-Ibal could not seek a pretence for quarrelling with him, and consequently would not fight with him. What completely convinced Saint-Ibal of my passion for

monsieur, was my aversion for the Duchess de Montbason, with whom monsieur was in love; I did not positively agree to it, but I owned, and I repeated, that I felt an unfortunate passion. Saint-Ibal was in despair and deeply affected, but he spoke to me incessantly on the subject. I painted to him in true colours the misery of loving without hope; I found a sort of pleasure in entertaining him every day with the sentiments of which he was the object. It is true, I could only excite his jealousy and wring his heart, by detailing to him the passion he inspired me with; but I enjoyed even his sufferings: we wept together; an intimate confidence was established between us: he was at least persuaded that I felt for him the warmest and most tender friendship, and the hope that I would be cured of my foolish passion sweetened the bitterness of such a strange situation. Our conversations became gradually less melancholy, and sometimes they were relieved by gaiety. He never let slip an

occasion of ruining monsieur in my mind. I never failed to defend monsieur, but I listened without rage, and even smiling to all the injuries which he loaded him with; from this he concluded that I began to love him less, and that if he should succeed in entirely depriving him of my esteem, I should again recover my reason and my liberty.

At the end of a few months he recommenced his interrogatories respecting the state of my heart. "And you," Saint-Ibal, I demanded, "what are your sentiments now?" "Ah! you know them but too well!" "Very well, I am not less constant than you; I am still the same."—"Heavens! is it possible? Can neither my love, nor my fidelity, nor my indulgence touch you. Yes, my indulgence; for I ought to hate you; and you sacrifice me to an absurd and chimerical passion. What can you expect from it?" "Nothing." "How can you be so foolish as to nourish it?" "I do not nourish it; it overpowers me notwithstanding

all my endeavours, because I cannot avoid the object of it." "Fly then, return to the Chateau de ***, I will follow you. Ah! when you shall be again in the chamber, in the place where you gave me that perfidious ball of silk, will you feel no remorse, and will you thus deprive me of all hope?" "Believe me, Saint-Ibal, I shall be then what I am here." "This is too much! I shall be the person then to give you an example of courage. I shall never see you again. I am to be attached to the Count de Soissons; he is going to set out on a long journey. I have a dispensation, but I will follow him, and I shall set out in two days." "Your absence will affect me a good deal; it will deprive me of my only consolation." "Dare you speak to me in this manner!" "I tell you the truth Saint-Ibal: notwithstanding my misfortune and my singularity, I love you; and in preference to any other person." "What inconceivable language! And you have an invincible pas-

sion for another ?" "This passion will not permit me to marry you; but my friendship for you is so tender, that if I could unite myself to the object of my love, I should make the sacrifice without hesitation, if I believed it necessary to your happiness." "There is in your character, your conduct, and your conversations, an incoherence and singularity which drive me to despair. But are you very sure that this inclination is insurmountable, or even that it exists? Is it not rather some romantic idea, some flight of imagination? In the name of heaven, reflect better on your situation." "No, Saint-Ibal, it is impossible to be mistaken respecting a sentiment which has been so long felt." "Adieu then, I shall set out in two days."

He took his departure accordingly. I wrote to him during the time of his absence; he answered me with equal irritation and love: his letters were passionate and filled with reproaches. In my situation this was all that I could desire:

On his return I found him the same. Obliged to hold the same language with him, I at length deprived him of every hope. For several months he ceased altogether to see me, and when he met me he affected to avoid me. What gave me the greatest uneasiness was a marriage for him which was incessantly spoken of. The Count de Melcy, who disseminated these false reports, had, in reality, no desire to see him married. Although his mode of living was very magnificent, his avarice was so sordid, that the idea of giving up a small part of his fortune inspired him with the desire of deferring as long as possible the period of his marriage; but he rejected no proposition which was made, making the false hopes which he threw out in the subject to different persons serve for forwarding his ambitious intrigues.

Saint-Ibal, still irritated against me, seemed to attach himself seriously to Mademoiselle de S***, a rich heiress, young and beautiful, and of high birth.

One day that I was invited to dine with the Duchess de Chevreuse, my trouble was extreme on entering to find there Madame de S*** with her daughter and Saint-Ibal: the latter affected to be very much occupied with Mademoiselle de S***; but sat at table beside her, whispered to her several times, and displayed the greatest gaiety. All these endeavours to pique me and to excite my displeasure produced a directly contrary effect, for they proved to me that Saint-Ibal continued to love me. Men are quite unskilful in this sort of artifice; the most able, always go very awkwardly to work. Saint-Ibal, who flattered himself that if he could not afflict me, he would at least mortify my vanity, saw with the greatest chagrin my profound tranquillity: I completely discomposed him by laughing very naturally at his forced pleasantry. He lost all his pretended gaiety, he became irritated, and he vainly endeavoured to dissemble it. After dinner the Duchess de Che-

vreuse drew from her work-bag a large ball of silk, and desired Mademoiselle de S*** to divide it in two, that is to say, to form a second from what was drawn from this great ball. Mademoiselle de S*** consented, on condition that some one should hold the ball from which she wound the half. Saint-Ibal offered. Mademoiselle de S*** took hold of the end of the silk, Saint-Ibal, holding the ball, withdrew reeling; his hands shook; he looked at me, saw me grow pale, and with my eyes fixed on this agitated silk! The ball escaped from his fingers, and rolled to the other extremity of the room.—Saint-Ibal, resting on the back of a chair, said, "*It is a giddiness!*" . . . Every one rose and hastened to him; I alone remained in my place in a condition impossible to be described. Saint-Ibal came to himself; he was made to sit down, the ball was picked up and taken by the Duchess de Chevreuse; the work was no longer thought of, and other things were talked of. Madame and Made-

moiselle de S*** went away. Saint-Ibal drew near to me: his physiognomy was no longer the same: he had seen my extreme emotion, and resumed his hopes: he could not speak to me, because I was seated between two females; but instantly laying hold of the ball of silk which was placed on a small table beside the Duchess, he said he wished to make amends for his awkwardness, and proposed to me to wind it. At this unexpected proposition I blushed, I stammered; never was there an embarrassment equal to that which I felt; however, it was impossible to refuse. I took the ball, and when I felt the thread drawn through, and vibrate under my fingers, when I recognised this old language, as tender and expressive for me at the end of six years as it was in the beginning of our loves, I was quite beside myself. Then Saint-Ibal, who was standing about ten paces from me, placed one knee on the ground, and said with

an agitated voice, "It is thus I ought to be"....He afterwards interpreted these words by adding that the attitude was more convenient for the work I was engaged in. During all this time there was a general conversation; and besides it was impossible to divine what was passing between us, as this scene was not remarked by any person. I took my departure; Saint-Ibal followed me, gave me his hand, and thanked me with the greatest transport. I knew not what I answered, for I was no longer myself. I was sure that he would call on me next day. What could I say to him? How could I afterwards disavow my sentiments? After much anxiety and reflexion, I at last determined on the resolution that I could take.

Next day Saint-Ibal appeared. "At length," he exclaimed, "you have triumphed over that romantic idea which has only filled your imagination! You are mine!" "Listen, Saint-Ibal," I replied:

"my existence depends on a great secret; I can only confide the half of it to you, that which you are the most interested in; but I do so under the express condition that you will not interrogate me respecting the remainder, for I have sworn by all that is most sacred never to reveal it." This beginning astonished and frightened him; however, he did not hesitate to take the oaths which I exacted of him in the strongest terms. "Very well," said I then to him, "when I repeated to you that I entertained a passion equally invariable and unfortunate, I did not deceive you, nor did I deceive myself, but I concealed the object of it from you." "Who is it then?" "You, Saint-Ibal; I have never loved but you." At these words he threw himself at my feet and gave expression to all that the most lively joy and the most tender love could inspire. "Alas!" said I, "we shall not be the happier for it! An insurmountable obstacle, which it is impossible for you to divine, opposes

our union; and that is the other part of my secret which I ought to conceal from you, and respecting which you have given me your word of honour never to interrogate me." Saint-Ibal remained confounded. However, in this conversation, the joy of learning that I never loved another triumphed in his heart over every other sentiment; but at last his grief was extreme. Not daring to interrogate me, or rather knowing the inutility of it, he fell upon a thousand extravagant conjectures; and he was so far from divining the truth, that he confided his distress to his father with a request that he would question me. The only consolation, which somewhat mitigated his chagrin, was the assurance which I gave him that certain events, or at least time, might smooth the obstacles which stood in the way of our happiness. Such is still our situation. Saint-Ibal, always constant, will never truly hurt me: he sometimes escapes from me: trifling distractions sometimes deprive

me of him for some time, but he always returns. His confidence, his esteem, his friendship, are for me the pledges of a durable attachment, which the lapse of six whole years has only served to fortify.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

# NOTES.

## (1.) Page 14.

On reading all the memoirs of that time, it is impossible not to do justice to the purity of conduct and the virtue of the princess.—Some verses of Voiture have been quoted against her with very little reason or sense, as they seem rather to prove that her conduct was universally acknowledged to be irreproachable: first, because Madame de Motteville, who was so sincere an admirer of the virtues of that princess, introduces them into her Memoirs; secondly, because Voiture addressed this impromptu to the queen herself, after she had become regent, with extreme devotion.—Certainly he never would have had the audacity and the folly to recall the memory of the foolish passion of the Duke of Buckingham, if this passion, even in the opinion of a few persons, had cast the slightest stain on the queen's reputation. The occasion of these verses was this:

"The queen, after she was regent (says Madame de Motteville), to prove to the Duchess d'Aguillon, the favourite niece of the late Cardinal de Richelieu, that she preserved no resentment, treated her with a remarkable distinction: she continued to

her the government of Hâvre, bestowed on her by the cardinal; a proceeding sufficiently singular to admit of its being called in question without animosity. The queen borrowed for some days from the duchess the beautiful house of Ruel, left her by the cardinal: it was impossible for Anne of Austria, then all powerful, to be without emotion in this place, where Cardinal Richelieu, her enemy, had so long received the homage of all France. On going over the apartments she stopped before the portrait of the cardinal, and said: 'If this great politician were in existence, he should still be, with my will, the Master of France, which he was so worthy of governing.'

Admirable expressions! which displayed so much greatness of soul, and the praise-worthy desire of excusing the absolute empire which Louis XIII. allowed this minister to exercise.

As the queen was one day parading the gardens of Ruel in a *caleche* with the princess, she perceived Voiture walking about with a thoughtful air. The princess, who was fond of Voiture, persuaded the queen to speak to him; and the queen asked him what he was thinking of. After a moment's reflection Voiture returned the following verses for answer:

> Je pensois que la destinée
> Après tant d'injustes malheurs,
> Vous a justement couronée
> De gloire, d'éclat et d'honneurs:

Mais que vous étiez plus heureuse
Lorsque vous étiez autrefois,
Je ne veux pas dire amoureuse ;
La rime le veut, toutefois.

Je pensois que ce pauvre amour,
Qui toujours vous prêta ses armes,
Est banni loin de votre cour,
Sans ses traits, son arc et ses charmes.
En quoi pourrois je profiter
En passant prés de vous ma vie,
Si vous pouvez si mal traiter
Ceux qui vous ont si bien servie?

Je pensois....(nous autres poëtes
Nous pensons extravagamment)
Ce que, dans l'humeur où vous êtes,
Vous feriez, si dans ce moment,
Vous avisiez en cette place
Venir le duc de Buckingham :
Et lequel seroit en disgrace
Du Duc, ou du père Vincent.

The queen only saw in this pleasantry a jeu d'esprit, with which she was so much pleased, that she wished to have the verses written out, and she gave copies of them to several persons. Twelve or fifteen years afterwards her taste, which was then altogether perfect, would have made these verses, though ingenious, appeár very indifferent to her, and the pleasantry infinitely too familiar ; but the manner

in which she received them is a complete proof of her innocence, and shews that her conduct was completely secure from every injurious suspicion. Accordingly, the reputation of this princess has never been attacked, except in libels, and a few contemptible romances.

(2.) Page 19.

Gaston d'Orleans, brother of Louis XIII. was a prince of an undecisive and weak character, governed by his favourites, and particularly by the Abbé de la Revière. This prince is admirably well painted in the Memoirs of the Cardinal de Retz.—The famous Mademoiselle de Montpensier was the daughter of Gaston d'Orleans.

Louis de Bourbon, Count de Soissons, was the son of Charles Count de Soissons, who entertained a strong passion for Catherine de Bourbon, the sister of Henry IV. Louis, Count de Soissons, was born at Paris in 1604. He distinguished himself against the Hugonots at the siege of Rochelle, and in a number of other engagements. Having refused to marry one of the nieces of the Cardinal de Richelieu, he was persecuted, and conspired against that minister: he failed in the conspiracy, made his escape, entered into a treaty with the enemy, and was killed at the battle of la Marfée. Varicarville and Saint-Ibal were attached to him. The Cardinal de Retz in his Memoirs praises the merit, the activity, and the talent of Saint-Ibal.

Charles de la Porte, Duke de la Meilleraye, was indebted for a remarkably great fortune to his merit, his courage, and the favour of the Cardinal de Richelieu, his relation: he was knight of the order of the Holy Ghost (Saint Esprit), in 1636, and the following year grand-master of the artillery. He possessed great military talents, and performed several memorable exploits. In 1639, after the taking of Hésdin, he received the staff of Marshal of France on the breach of that place, from the hands of Louis XIII. He died full of honours, merited by glorious actions and great services, in 1664, at the age of sixty-two. His son married Hortense Mancini, the niece of Cardinal Mazarin, and succeeded to the name of Mazarin.

The commander de Jars, connected with all the enemies of the cardinal, and probably entrusted with their secrets, passed eleven months in a dungeon in the Bastille; from thence he was sent to Troyes to be tried: on quitting the Bastille, he saw on the steps before the building several prisoners who were his friends, and among others, the Marshal de Bassompierre:—

"Adieu," said he, "I know not where I am going; but you may be assured that whatever happens to me I am a man of honour; I shall never be wanting either to my friends or myself."

He kept his word. He underwent a number of questions, always answered with firmness, never contradicted himself, or betrayed any fear. They

wished to extort from him, by threatening him with death, the secrets of the queen. and the intrigues of the Duchess de Chevreuse, and Chateauneuf, the keeper of the Seals devoted to the duchess of whom he was amorous. The commander knew of all these intrigues, without having himself any share in them; but his discretion was not to be shaken. Laffemas, an iniquitous judge, sold to the cardinal, caused the commander to be sentenced to death by a corrupted tribunal, and he was led to the very scaffold. The cardinal, who knew his innocence, had merely wished to fri hten him. At the very moment he supposed he was going to be beheaded he received his pardon. He travelled, and afterwards returned to the court.

Roger de Bellegarde, duke and peer, and *grand ecuyer* of France, was loaded with estates and honours under four kings; Henry III. Henry IV. Louis XIII. and Louis XIV. during the regency. He was celebrated for his gracefulness and for his gallantry, which he prolonged under their reigns. He was beloved by Gabrielle d'Estrées; more than thirty years afterwards by Mademoiselle de Guise, who was then in all the splendor of her early youth, and who found a rival in her mother. He ended by declaring a passionate sentiment for Anne of Austria. He died in 1646, at the age of eighty-three: thus he lived during three years of the regency of Anne of Austria. He left no posterity.

Leon, Count de Chevigny, was the son of Claude Bothillier, secretary of Hoive. Chavigny owed his

fortune to his talents and the favour of Richelieu. Louis XIII. in his testament, nominated him one of the council of the regency ; but Anne of Austria, who did not like him, kept him back from affairs. Chavigny died in 1652, at the age of forty-four. Chavigny had a brother, who was the father of the famous Abbé de Rancé.

Mary Rohan Montbazon, Duchess de Chevreuse, was born in 1600, married in 1617 Charles d'Albert, Duke de Luynes, Constable of France, and the favourite of Louis XIII. After the death of the constable, she re-married in 1622 Claude de Lorraine, Duke de Chevreuse, formerly Prince de Joinville, and the lover of the Marchioness de Verneuil, and rival of Henry IV. The Duke de Chevreuse, much older than she was, died in 1657, at the age of seventy-nine. The abilities of the Duchess de Chevreuse are praised by the Cardinal de Retz as superior to those of any other woman of that age. She was several times exiled. Piety at length deprived her of her relish for intrigue. She died in 1679. Through her the Duchy of Chevreu came to the children of the first marriage. She had only three daughters in her second ; two of them took the veil, and the third died unmarried.

(3.) Page 32.

This Doctor Morin, the eldest of sixteen children, was a botanist and physician. Having obtained the situation of Physician to the Hotel Dieu, he be-

queathed to that hospital all the money he received of his pension. Those acts of charity were then common among all classes. The anecdote of religious firmness which I have attributed to Madame de Bregi belongs to Mademoiselle de Guise, of whom Morin was the physician; and in addition Mademoiselle de Guise subjoined a codicil to her settlement, by which she bequeathed an annuity of two thousand livres to Dr. Morin during his life. This physician, who lived the life of a saint, and in continual abstinence, died in 1715, at the age of eighty. See his *Eloge* by Fontenelle.

(4.) PAGE 40.

M. de Charbonnière, in his *Essay on the Sublime*, has made a very interesting episode of the Treaty; only he has changed the name of the heroine, whom he calls *Ceselli*, and the reason of this may be easily conceived.

Towards the end of the same century other women of illustrious birth made a display of equally brilliant examples of extraordinary courage: Phillis de la Tour-du-Pin de la Charce, on the irruption of the Duke of Savoy into Dauphiny, in 1692, ordered the villages of the canton to take arms, put herself at their head, gave several battles in the defiles of the mountain, and contributed by her intrepidity to make the enemy abandon the country. For these actions she received a pension from Louis XIV. was besides allowed to place her sword,

her pistols, and the escutcheon of her arms, in the Treasury of Saint Denis. Her mother and sister at the same time performed several similar actions. All these numerous circumstances, which took place in so religious an age, prove that religion, which in itself elevates every action, gives at the same time a sublime energy to the soul. For instance, what an exaltation religion formerly gave to all the chivalrous virtues! What constancy in enterprise, and fidelity in engagements!

(5.) PAGE 88.

If I were to cite all the praise-worthy anecdotes of this period, my book would be a history and not a novel; I should have no room for the insertion of my Fictions. The following trait of that time deserves to be related.

During the siege of Cazal, M. de Toiras, the commandant of the place, after having melted all his plate, was obliged to melt also a piece of cannon, to be coined, to supply the want of money. A rich merchant of Cazal undertook to withdraw all this money from circulation, and pay the value of it. After the siege it amounted to two hundred and fifty thousand livres. This assurance extricated the commandant from his embarrassment, and the soldiers were completely paid. The name of the generous merchant was Georges Rossi. M. de Toiras, on leaving Cazal, immediately thought of requiting the merchant, and on his arrival at the camp of

the Marshal de Schomberg, he demanded from him the two hundred and fifty thousand livres, which the marshal refused: on this the camp began to murmur, and unanimously consented rather to renounce their pay, than that M. de Toiras should break his word. Rossi was reimbursed.

The noble defence of Cazal, and several other exploits, procured the staff of Marshal of France for M. de Toiras, which was bestowed on him by Louis XIII., notwithstanding the opposition of Richelieu by whom he was hated. His brother embraced the party of the Duke of Orleans, the cardinal's enemy. Toiras was disgraced, deprived of his pensions and his government. The enemies of France made him the most brilliant offers, which this great man rejected, justly thinking that nothing in the world can authorize the bearing arms against our country.

(6.) PAGE 180.

Saint Francis de Sales was of an illustrious family, and possessed a great talent for preaching: he seldom preached in towns, dreading lest the applause of men should deprive him of the fruit of his labours; but he went about among the villages, instructing the country-people, and he was the apostle of Chablois. Henry IV. wished to retain him at his court; Francis preferred to remain in his bishopric, observing that *the court was not the element of prelates.* He even refused a pension which was offered

him by this prince.—"I cannot bear," said he, "an ecclesiastic to complain of poverty: let him remember what he said in the face of the church on receiving the tonsure, that God alone was his inheritance. My revenue is sufficient for my necessities, and more would be superfluous."

This great bishop possessed also the mildness and indulgent goodness characteristic of true sanctity. He was particularly fond of children, of country-people, and soldiers, whom he always called *our brave defenders*. It was he who said *that conversation ought to resemble water, of which the best and clearest is the simplest: and when we enter into conversation with our neighbour, we ought to be pleased, and to shew that we are pleased*. It was he also who observed, that to *bury the talent of writing, when God has given it to us, is an account which we have to render to God.*

Saint Francis de Sales left an admirable collection of Letters, all of which are extremely interesting.

END OF THE NOTES TO THE FIRST VOLUME.

S. Clarke, Printer, Well-Street, London.